

THE
R E V E N G E
O F
G U E N D O L E N.

By the Earl of Chesham



BRUTUS, the grandson of Æneas, is said to have planted a colony in Britain. He found the country inhabited by Giants, whom he subdued and exterminated, after many conflicts; in which Corineus, one of his followers, distinguished himself so much, that he was rewarded with the sovereignty of Cornwall, which was called from his name. Brutus, at his death, divided the rest of the island among his sons: Albanaët had the Northern part, called from him Albania; Camber had the country between the Severn and the Irish sea, called Cambria; the third and largest share, which was called Loëgria, fell to Locrine. He married Guendolen, the daughter of Corineus, and had a son by her called Madan. Humber, king of the Huns, having invaded the dominions of Albanaët, whom he defeated and killed in a great battle, advanced to the frontiers of Loëgria, where he was encountered by Locrine, and lost the battle, and his life. Among the captives was a beautiful Lady called Estrildis, of whom Locrine became enamoured; but fearing the resentment of Corineus, concealed his commerce with her till the death of that prince, when he divorced his wife, and acknowledged Estrildis for his queen. Guendolen took refuge in Cornwall, and raising an army, invaded the dominions of Locrine. Here the action of the Poem begins.

The painful conscience of an injured Queen
For violated Faith & Honor despised.

THE
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B O O K I.

O F violated faith, of broken vows,
And the dire vengeance of an injur'd Queen,
I sing. Fair Goddess * of the silver lake,
With lili'd wreaths braiding thy dropping hair,
Sad victim of her fury, had not all 5
The heav'nly guards of maiden innocence
Receiv'd thee, plung'd amid the wave, and borne
Thy languid limbs, where with assiduous care
'The sister Nymphs renew'd thy faded charms,
And with immortal beauty gave to bloom ; 10

* Sabrina. See Comus.

Sabrina,



Sabrina, gentle Goddess, aid the song!
 Call up the shadowy forms of ancient days!
 Here fierce and furious for her slighted charms,
 Let haughty Guendolen her vengeance pour,
 Stare * over slaughter'd thousands roll his waves, 15
 And sad Efrildis sink with boding fears!

Now from Belerium †, and the western main,
 From Menna's rocky coast, and the rude craggs
 Of high Ocrinum, from the source of Vale,
 To where Voluba spreads her winding bays, 20
 And proud Pendennis, far at sea descried,
 Directs the Tyrian mariner, who steers
 His vessel, freighted from the spicy East,
 For Cenio's ample port; from the tall cliff,
 Where bold Corineus ‡ foil'd his Giant-foe, 25
 Hurl'd headlong to the main, the troubled waves
 Roll'd back affrighted, and the mountain shook.
 From Cambala §, whose lucid waters stray'd
 As yet unstain'd with blood, hereafter doom'd

* A river, on whose banks Locrine fought the forces of Cornwall.

† Ancient names of places in Cornwall.

‡ Corineus was a leader who accompanied Brutus, and had Cornwall as his share.

§ A river, on whose banks the battle was fought between Mordred and king Arthur.

To witness horrid war, in guilty fight 30
 Britons with Britons mix'd, and Arthur slain.
 From all her mountains, and from all her streams,
 Cornubia sends her armed sons to war,
 Breathing revenge. Before th' assembled tribes
 Their injur'd Princess Guendolen appears. 35
 Faded and wan she seems; but shame, and rage,
 And mingled pride, are struggling in her breast,
 And flush a transient colour o'er her cheek.
 No costly gems upon her forehead blaze,
 Loose to the wind her hair disorder'd flies, 40
 And for the regal purple's graceful folds
 She wears the garb of mourning. Pity seiz'd
 The crowd, and for a while suspended rage.
 But as she told the story of her woes,
 And perjur'd Locrine's guilt, Corineus' daughter, 45
 Abandon'd, outcast, and a slave * advanc'd
 To fill her bed and throne; when, glowing now
 With generous pride, and graceful indignation,
 She call'd upon her mighty father's shade,
 The memory of their prince, their country's honour,
 Kindled in every breast the flame of vengeance. 51
 They clash'd their sounding arms, and rush'd along.
 And now, the rapid Tamar pass'd, invade

* Estrildis, taken in the camp of Humber, king of the Huns, when he was defeated by Locrine.

Loëgria's * frontier, and defenceless plains,
 With sudden war and ruthless devastation. 55
 As when th' inhabitant of those fair isles
 Beyond th' Atlantic, when the sky serene
 And the calm air invites, wooes the fresh breeze,
 Which, lightly sweeping o'er the level deep,
 Moistens his pinions in the cooling wave; 60
 Delighted he inhales the grateful air.
 Sudden the tumid billows rise; the earth
 Meanwhile, of ill prophetic, murmurs forth
 A fullen sound: trembling and pale, he flies.
 In vain. High o'er his head, the dreadful roar 65
 Of waters, from the whole collected sea
 Rais'd horrible, pursues with hideous din
 His flight; and now before him foaming spreads
 The vast o'erarching deluge; now it breaks
 In more than thunder, and th' insatiate deep, 70
 Howling o'er cultur'd fields, and peopled towns,
 Reforbs a nation with the turning waves.
 Not with less horror pale Loëgria shook.
 And now the rumour reach'd, where by the banks
 Of that fair stream †, whose winding course divides 75

* Britain was divided into three kingdoms by the sons of Brutus. Albanact had Albania; Camber, Cambria; and Locrine, Loëgria.

† The Severn.

Loëgria from the lands by Camber rul'd,
In dalliance soft, and unsuspecting ease,
With her his Scythian spouse, the fair Estrildis,
Acknowledg'd now his queen, the monarch lay,
And all the weighty cares of state resign'd. 80
Rous'd from his dream of bliss, but not dismay'd,
He bids his warlike chiefs appear in arms ;
And now in marshall'd ranks his veteran bands
Innumerable, beat th' extended plain
With sounding footsteps : to the shrill-ton'd fife, 85
And martial symphonies they move embattled.
Along the files the mighty Locrine darts
Exulting his experienc'd eye, and glows
With the bright hope of promis'd victory.
He gives the word. As by one soul inform'd, 90
The marching myriads halt. Around their king
Advancing from the ranks assemble now
The leaders of his battles. Rising slow,
With look compos'd, speaking deliberate courage,
Firm to sustain, not rashly tempting danger, 95
The monarch thus : " Brave partners of my toils,
And partners of my glory ; you, who met
With me the bold invader of our realm
'Th' impetuous Humber, when with spoils adorn'd,
And trophies, torn from bleeding Albany, 100
He pass'd our limits, and return'd no more.

The

The foaming river swell'd with Scythian blood.
 'Tis mine to mingle where the battle burns,
 And bear the death of thousands on my spear.
 Yet not in fierce and savage deeds of arms, 105
 Where blind revenge, or lust of conquest drives,
 Your king delights. Mine be the sword of justice;
 Nor you shall fully your victorious arms
 In an unrighteous cause. Then hear, and judge.
 If I have wrong'd the banish'd Guendolen, 110
 Or ~~to too light~~ ^{doom'd too light} a penance ~~doom'd~~ ^{for} her crimes,
 The prince appeals his people. To relate
 With what fond care, and unsuspecting kindness
 I cherish'd that false serpent; what the toils
 I bore, how oft in hardy battle bled 115
 To fix her father's throne, what now avails?
 Not with domestic broils alone to shake
 Our peace, to trample our imperial crown,
 And hold in shameful bonds our sovereign state,
 In dark conspiracy, and secret league, 120
 Each factious spirit, all whom crimes made desperate,
 The forcerefs allur'd by promis'd gain,
 Or hope of safety, or her father's power.
 But from my side, her impious artifice
 Seduc'd my son *, the destin'd heir of empire, 125

* Madan, the son of Locrine and Guendolen, was brought up with his grandfather Corineus, in Cornwall.

Plac'd in her father's court, and guarded there,
Hostage of my subjection. This I bore,
Studious of public peace, and slow to vengeance.
At length, by long impunity made bold,
She grasp'd my sceptre with more fierce impatience,
Invok'd th' infernal pow'rs with horrid rites, 131
And practis'd curst spells against my life.
Yet mindful of the love I once had borne her,
The glories of her race, our kindred lineage,
Still mercy temper'd justice. From my throne 135
And bed divorc'd, I spar'd her forfeit head.
Now force must win what fraud in vain essay'd,
And bind Loëgria in Cornubian chains.
Nor mov'd alone by love, but public care,
I led Estrildis to the bridal bed. 140
She is no princess of a rival nation :
Sprung from a warlike race, though now extinguish'd,
She may with lineal heroes grace the throne,
But not with faction shake it." Locrine thus,
With fair pretence, and specious gloss of words, 145
Veil'd the foul breach of faith and holy vows.
Not unapproving heard the Chiefs : (to them
Dear was his person, dear his martial ardour :)
Nor much solicitous, with nice regard,
To weigh the right, avow'd their prince's cause. 150
Perhaps the Pow'rs of Heav'n their partial minds
Sway'd to erroneous judgment ; guilt so great

To mark with signal punishment, and shew
How vain the force of mortals to protect
Against eternal Justice. Parting now, 155
Each to his post-repair'd, and to his troops
Announc'd determin'd war. At once arose
Their universal shout, that shook the sky.
The monarch hears with joy. Meanwhile he seeks
His fair Estrildis in the secret bower. 160
All bath'd in tears the pensive nymph he found,
With sad reflection pale, and anxious fears.
Fondly he strain'd her to his manly breast,
And thus: "Why weeps my love, my best Estrildis?
Thy Locrine's arm is not unskill'd in war, 165
And Fortune bears my standard to the field."
"Oh had Estrildis," thus the Queen replied,
"Cut short ev'n in the blossom of her youth,
Perish'd ere yet she lisp'd a mother's name;
Ere she had seen a noble father slain, 170
In battle vanquish'd in a foreign land!
Or had at least more fav'ring Gods assign'd
To her the common ruin of her race!
Had War's remorseless hand, in one sad day,
Mix'd with the fire's the daughter's virgin blood, 175
Ere in the secret shade, with guilty pleasure,
I listen'd to thy tender tale of love,
And with fond rapture prest thee to my bosom,
Thy hands yet reeking with my father's slaughter!

Now

Now his dear image haunts my broken slumbers. 180

Sometimes I see him pale, deform'd with wounds ;

Dreadful he frowns upon me, calls me parricide,

Dooms me to horrid pains, and ling'ring death,

Or worse than death, to savage Guendolen

Delivers me, a trembling, helpless victim. 185

With kinder gesture now, and look benignant,

He leads me wand'ring through embow'ring groves,

O'er meadows gay with flow'rs, by lucid streams,

And whispers soft forgiveness in my ear.

Sudden the scene is chang'd. The cry of woe 190

Invades my sense, the scream of female horror.

I see thee stretch'd before me, pale and lifeless,

And pierc'd with wounds, and stiff with clotted
blood.

Shrieking I wake, and curse the womb that bore me."

"Would'st thou forget our loves?" the hero cried:

"No ; when these black ideas haunt thy fancy, 196

Bid fond remembrance dwell on ev'ry kiss,

Each stolen rapture, and each soft endearment.

Pledge of our mutual bliss, thy gentle Sabra

Displays her blooming charms. Oh fondly press 200

The beauteous maid to thy maternal bosom,

Then, if thou canst, wish we had never lov'd.

Nor deem that Locrine was thy father's foe :

For honour was our strife, not hate or vengeance.

The brave, my best lov'd, still prize the brave, 205

And,

And, might the hero's shade revisit earth,
Pleas'd would his martial hand bestow his daughter
On him whose prowess could surpass his own."
Thus sooth'd he his fair spouse. A pleasing calm
Stole o'er her soul, a sweet suspense of grief. 210
She rais'd her streaming eyes, and smil'd in tears.
So, from the region of the sultry South,
When dark collected vapours rolling on,
Have quench'd the radiance of the summer morn,
And the loud thunder growls, and rain descends, 215
Sudden the golden Sun darts forth his beams,
Scatt'ring the thin skirts of the passing storm;
Then smiles the joyful Earth; but other clouds
With dark and threat'ning aspect lour behind.
Now warlike cares demand the Chief, He rose 220
Prepar'd to part. Again her sorrows flow,
Again the echoing roof resounds her cries.
She beats her wretched breast, intreats his stay,
And hangs upon his robe in frantic grief;
Exhausted now, she faints. The gentle Sabra 225
With milder action presses with her lips
His hand, while from her eyes the trickling moisture
Falls silent: he, though firm of soul, not proof
'Gainst human feelings, turns his face to hide
The tear he checks in vain, and hastes away. 230
And now he reach'd the plain, where sheath'd in arms,
And rang'd in just array, Loëgria's youth

Expect

Expect their leader. He with joy surveys
Their numerous files, and marks their bold demeanour.
Nor less elate, they with admiring eyes 235
Beheld their graceful Chief. He seem'd a God.
Such to their fathers, by the sacred wave
Of their ador'd Scamander, when the foe
Sought the vain shelter of their wooden walls,
Appear'd the mighty Hector, or confest 240
To mortal eyes, the dreadful God of War
Flam'd in the foremost battle. Fear and flight
Precede. Wild horror seiz'd each Grecian heart.
"Ye brave assertors of your country's rights,
Ye genuine sons of Troy," the hero cried, 245
"Whence is this mighty nation, whose bold arms
Insult our frontiers, and provoke our wrath?
Are these the matchless warriors, they who late
Suppliant, with outstretch'd arms, implor'd our aid,
When the rude natives from their cloudy hills 250
Scourg'd back the weak invaders, who but ill
Sustain'd their aspect fierce, and * giant strength,
When, loos'ning from their seats the rooted rocks,
They hurl'd th' enormous ruin on their foe?
Then, suppliant, they implor'd our aid, and wag'd 255
Successful war, with forces not their own.
Presumptuous! they who would our country seize,

* Brutus found Britain, and Cornwall in particular, inhabited by Giants.

Have none but by our gift. Advance, my friends,
Advance your ensigns, lift your shining arms.

They view our fertile plains with envious eyes; 260

Those fertile plains superior valour won,

Superior valour guards. Hence let them fly

'Midst rugged rocks, and desert caves, to seek

A refuge from our wrath." He spoke; at once

A thousand banners float upon the air; 265

At once they march: a thousand instruments

Sound forth their martial strains, and as they move

Loud rings the brazen armour. Neighing steeds

Whirl o'er the smoking plain the scythed cars;

Earth shakes, and heav'n's wide-echoing arch re-

sounds. 270

Upon their dancing plumes, and glitt'ring helms,

Sits Confidence. Elate with hope they move,

And eager for the war: some God deceives

Their dazzled sense, and urges on to ruin.

Dire omens else had warn'd, and signs portentous. 275

For thunders roll'd, and through the darken'd air

Gleam'd the blue lightning; o'er their heads the

raven

Oft flapp'd his wing; the towering eagle scream'd,

Claiming his destin'd prey. But now apart,

And distant from his host, the dauntless Locrine 280

Pour'd to his guardian Pow'rs his ardent pray'r.

" Oh thou, bright author of my race, fair Queen

Of

Of smiles, and young desires, delight of Heav'n !
 Earth owns thy genial pow'r, and pours for thee
 The fragrance of the charming rose. 285

For thee stern Neptune stills his raging waves,
 And touch'd by thy soft pow'r, the gloomy Dis
 Unbends his fullen brow. The fire of Gods
 On thee, his best belov'd, delighted smiles,
 Sooth'd with th' ambrosial kiss, and to thy hand 290
 Permits th' almighty sceptre. Goddess, now

Affist thy vot'ry, whom proud Juno's ire,
 Still hostile to our Trojan race, pursues !
 By Ida's conscious shades, where first enraptur'd
 Anchises gaz'd on thy immortal charms : 295

By the soft pleasures of thy Paphian bower.
 If, by thy gentle influence led, I woo'd
 My fair Estrildis in the secret grove,
 And prest her yielding beauties in my arms ;
 Protect the passion by thyself inspir'd ! 300

And thou, impetuous Mars, before whose spear
 Withers the strength of nations ; thou, to whom
 I vow'd my vigorous youth, my guardian God !
 Aid thou my vengeance, and direct my sword !"
 Thus pray'd the hero, but he pray'd in vain. 305

The Queen of Love, the dreadful God of Arms,
 Well pleas'd attend, but angry Jove denies.

Mean-while, in fair Estrildis' anxious breast
 Conflicting passions fought. Th' attendant train

B

Essay'd



Essay'd the charm of soothing words, or drew 310
 Spells of more moving force from tuneful harps
 Attemper'd to soft voices; soft as those
 Which nightly floating o'er Trinacrian seas
 Melodious, ravish'd the delighted sense,
 And lur'd to sweet destruction. And their song 315
 Was fram'd to win upon the ear of Care,
 With light and playful airs, inspiring joy.
 Of amorous wiles they told, and moon-light pranks
 Of gamesome Fairies, who in merry mood,
 With shapes uncouth, and strange fantastic visions,
 Mock the deluded sense of simple swain. 321
 Unnotic'd died away the dulcet sounds.
 Ill-boding fears sat heavy at her breast,
 And irksome memory of sorrows past,
 And absence from the lord of her desires, 325
 And conscious sense of guilt, suppress'd in vain.
 Yet oft she check'd th' invading woe, and strove,
 Decking with languid smiles her faded cheek,
 To rouse expiring hope. As oft recoil'd,
 With double force, the melancholy train 330
 Of black ideas on her tortur'd soul.
 Thus with alternate sway, imperfect hope,
 And keen corroding anguish, swell her breast,
 Till with the painful struggle over-worn,
 She sinks in tears, and yielded all to grief. 335
 Like some fair Elm which lifts her graceful head,
 And

And bears her leafy honours to the clouds,
In all their summer pride. The fierce South-west
Tempestuous, now with strong continued blast
Beats on her side, and howls amidst her boughs, 340
Frequent the crackling branches bend, and wave
Convulsive to and fro ; now yielding stoop
Before the whirlwind ; now with force elastic
Rebounding, once again aspire to heaven.
Louder the tempest swells, the lab'ring roots 345
Creaking scarce grasp the soil ; now crashing break,
Prone falls the tree, and loads the groaning earth.

An ancient dame there was, to whom the charge
Of young Estrildis, when untimely death
Seiz'd on his fav'rite Queen, great Humber gave.
She, when the Chief unfurl'd his vent'rous sails, 351
And brav'd the terrors of a sea untried,
In quest of happier climes, and endless fame,
Follow'd her lovely pupil, and when low
The monarch lay, beneath the British sword, 355
The partner of her chains, she sooth'd her grief ;
And now her fortune shar'd, for fair Estrildis
Priz'd her o'er all, and as a mother lov'd.
Her name was Boarex. The conscious Moon
Oft had beheld her, in her native wilds, 360
Tracing with mystic rites the Runic rhyme ;
And oft had felt her pow'rful charms, compell'd
To stoop reluctant from her cloudy throne,

And to a mortal's daring view lay bare
The dreadful secrets of the world unknown. 365

With grief she saw the Queen, her darling care,
Oppress'd, and yielding to despair; she saw,
And lent her ready aid. At her command
Th' officious crowd retire. Approaching near,
Softly she kiss'd the mourner's cheek, and thus 370
With soothing words address'd. "And weeps my
child,

Of me forgetful, and my faithful love;
Forgetful of the wonders of my art,
Which bends to my controul the stubborn Fates?
Yet lives thy Boarex, and while the blood 375
Flows in her aged veins, she lives for thee."
Raising her languid head, Estrildis said,
"What art, alas! can heal my wounded mind,
Restore my innocence, recall the past?
Yet save my Locrine, and I bear to live." 380
"Daughter," she cried, "what frantic words are
these?

No crime is thine, for 'tis no crime to love.
What tho' the banish'd Guendolen behold
With impotence of rage, and envious eyes,
Thy beauty grace her abdicated throne, 385
Exult, my child, and thank the bounteous Gods,
Who crown with fair success thy noble love,
And bid the poor dejected captive rise

A glorious

A glorious Queen, and spurn her haughty foe.
 Futurity's dark volumes to thy view 390
 Soon shall my art unfold, and let fair hope
 Glow on thy cheek, and lighten in thine eyes.
 When the black frown of jealous Guendolen
 Gloom'd on thy stolen joys, and with pale fear
 Chill'd all the raptures of thy secret bower ; 395
 The ill to thee design'd, by me made frustrate,
 Recoil'd upon herself, and from her brow
 I tore the diadem to beam on thine.
 And though Cornubia, arming in her cause,
 Point all her vengeance at thy Locrine's head, 400
 My spells can turn the thirsty dart aside,
 And from the gloomy * Hela's drear abode
 Call forth those dreadful ministers of wrath,
 At whose approach the central earth is mov'd,
 And the great Sun grows pale." While yet she speaks,
 Estrildis' colour glows, and fades, by turns. 406
 Her bosom heaves with kindling hope, and fear
 Subsides, and busy conscience stings no more.
 Silent awhile she stood, and doubting still.
 But Boarex, who with attentive eye 410
 Had mark'd the secret workings of her mind,
 Her rising spirit, and her bright'ning eyes,

* Hela was the Goddess of Death among the Northern Nations.

Well knew her purpose gain'd, and ere the train
 Of melancholy thought, and fears prophetic,
 Could o'er her breast resume their sway, with words
 Of cheering import, as might best confirm 416
 Her hopes new entertain'd, she thus pursu'd.
 " Not with vain sounds, my daughter, to beguile
 Thy credulous ear, but with performance full
 To satisfy thy wish, have I approach'd thee. 420
 For this, when night descends, and o'er our heads
 The Moon rides high, upon the silent stream
 Spreading her glimm'ring rays, and rightly call'd
 Aids the slow-mutter'd charm, seek we the grove,
 And with observance due, and powerful verse, 425
 Invoke the dreadful Deities, who weave
 The fatal Web *. Their potent ministers,
 Slaughter, and Flight, attend their high behest,
 Spare whom they favour, won by sacrifice
 And prayer, and whom they hate with death con-
 found. 430
 These shall befriend us. I will teach thy hand
 To trace the backward spell, and by what art
 Compell'd, the spirits that haunt the earth, or tend
 The gliding wave, or play in floods of fire,
 Or ride upon the stormy winds, assist 435

* See Gray's Poems.

The dark designs, and work the will of man."
She ended, and Estrildis, re-affur'd,
And confident in hope, thus answer'd glad.
" Oh more than mother, who to second life
Hast wak'd me, sitting in the shade of death, 440
Or worse than death, in comfortless despair !"
As thus she spoke, she rose. Th' attendant train
Meanwhile before the fair pavilion stood,
In silent expectation, and with tears
Deplor'd the sorrows of their Queen ; when lo 445
The founding doors unfold, and forth she comes
In all the blaze of beauty. Joy divine
Fills every breast, as when a God appears.
The veil, thrown backward from her heav'nly face,
Part loosely falling, in transparent folds, 450
Upon her snowy breast, which gently rose,
Half hid from mortal view the dazzling charm :
Part mingled graceful with her glossy hair,
Below her slender waist, in easy ringlets
Flowing with artful negligence. Her eyes 455
Sparkled with liquid fire, and darted quick
Contagious madness, thrilling ecstasies,
And love inevitable. On her cheek
Sported the dimpled smile ; while from her lips
Breathes fragrance, like the tepid breeze that steals
O'er Eastern seas, and from his dewy wings 461

Shakes spices, and forewarns the mariner
 Of Ceylon, or the rich Moluccan coast ;
 Or that which sooths th' Arabian youth, reclin'd
 Beneath the spreading palm, and singing loud 465
 In glowing numbers rapturous tales of love.
 She mov'd like Venus, when expecting joy
 She fought the Cyprian bow'r. Before her flew
 Fair Hope, and wanton Mirth, and gay Desire.
 The waving myrtles bow'd their fragrant heads 470
 In sign of worship, and the lovely rose
 Put forth spontaneous, while the busy zephyr
 Gather'd their several sweets, and wafted round
 Ambrosial odours. Thither soon the Graces,
 Join'd with the laughing Loves, in mimic chains 475
 Of roses wreath'd, their willing captive led,
 The fair Adonis. Such the Queen appear'd,
 So mov'd, so look'd, so smil'd. Her virgins knew
 Her mind to pleasure turn'd, and light disport.
 Now breath'd the flute, and in melodious strains 480
 Soft voices sung the praise of gentle May ;
 For that kind season now, with all her sweets,
 And all her varied tints, the place adorn'd.
 The place was such as poets feign'd of old
 Hesperian gardens and Elysian scenes. 485
 Here spread the level lawn, here gently flow'd
 The silent river : from the brink uprose

The

The swelling hill thick clad with various trees.
 Below, the poplar, and the dark-leav'd alder,
 And the pale willow, whose depending boughs, 490
 Mov'd by the sighing breeze, oft lightly sweep,
 And sweeping, lightly mark the glassy surface.
 But on the summit the majestic oak
 Spreads wide his giant arms, the growth of ages.
 Here woods are pil'd on woods, hills over hills 495
 Successive rise. These, sloping, gently sink
 Into the vale beneath ; while those abrupt
 Frown o'er the mountain torrent, that now glides
 With rapid course, and now o'er fragments huge
 Of broken rocks, by the swift lightning's rage 500
 Disjoin'd, or loosen'd by autumnal rains,
 Across its channel thrown, indignant bounds
 In foam. Here sunny plains extend, and there
 Contracted vallies, dark with pendent woods,
 Through which the gale sounds mournful, and the
 stream 505
 Runs murmuring. Gloomy caves with moss o'er-
 grown,
 The dripping grotto, and the bubbling spring,
 Where Fairies haunt. Now seen thro' distant trees
 Glitters the rushing cataract. Rude rocks,
 Enormous piles, and the vast mountain where 510
 Upon the airy summit, to the foot

Of man impervious, high above the clouds her nest
 The eagle builds, and hails the rising sun,
 While yet the nether world is wrapp'd in night,
 Here close the scene. And here the opening glade
 Invites the eye, while under arching boughs 516
 Sudden appear the chearful haunts of men ;
 The seats of industry, the cultur'd plain,
 The smoke flow rising from the shelter'd cot,
 And farther still the crowded city, whence 520
 A thousand roofs, and glitt'ring domes, reflect
 The Sun's meridian beam. The silver lake
 Here spreads its lucid bosom, where the sail
 Before the breeze scuds lightly ; on the banks
 Rise fair pavilions ; flow'rs of various hues, 525
 And various scents, mix'd with each blooming shrub
 To Flora dear, in fair assemblage grow.

Such were the scenes th' enamour'd Locrine gave,
 Th' abode of fair Estrildis, and of Love.
 There in soft ease, and ever-varied sports, 530
 She nourish'd amorous wishes, tender thoughts.
 Now sooth'd with airy music, now reclin'd
 Upon the flow'ry couch, with roses crown'd,
 She sees delighted, on the shaven turt,
 The nimble dancers tread their wanton maze. 535
 Now in the gilded vessel, proudly gay
 With purple streamers, floats ; while from afar,

From

From various instruments, along the waves
Comes soften'd, stealing on the ravish'd ear,
The propagated harmony. Now swell 540
The notes distinct and clear ; now die away,
As shifts the breeze reflected from the shore.
Thus till the night her fable wings extend,
And the fair Moon provokes to mystic rites,
The lovely dame beguil'd the ling'ring hours. 545

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

THE

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE THIRD BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE FIFTH BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE SIXTH BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE SEVENTH BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE EIGHTH BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE NINTH BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE TENTH BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE ELEVENTH BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE TWELFTH BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE THIRTEENTH BOOK OF THE BIBLE

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THE TWENTY-FIRST BOOK OF THE BIBLE

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THE THIRTIETH BOOK OF THE BIBLE

THE
R E V E N G E
O F
G U E N D O L E N.

B O O K II.

WITH rapid march the bold Loëgrian youth
 Advancing, leave the Avon far behind,
 The Avon then a poor inglorious stream,
 Nor grac'd with holy rites, nor poet's song.
 Yet oft at eve the solitary swain, 5
 That musing wander'd by the fringed bank,
 And mark'd the moon-beam dancing on the wave,
 Listen'd with wonder, and delighted awe,
 While airy voices in his ravish'd ear
 Breath'd sounds harmonious; and the sacred lyre, 10
 Mov'd by the flying touch of hands unseen,

Gave

Gave forth her voice divine. For dear, ev'n then,
Dear to the Muses flow'd the gentle stream :
 Upon whose banks (while in enraptur'd strain
 Prophetic, rang'd before th' eternal throne, 15
 They sung the awful Providence of Jove)
 The mighty bard they saw, whose piercing eye,
 So fate decreed, glancing from earth to heav'n,
 With vast capacious spirit, unconfin'd,
 Grasp'd universal Nature, and beyond 20
 The narrow limits of the world of sense,
 On daring pinion soar'd : now sporting light
 With mirthful fancy in the fields of air,
 Marking the gambols of the Elfin train :
 Or with more potent voice, and magic song, 25
 Moving the realms beneath : the yawning sepulchre
 Gives up its dead, and Hell, with all her Pow'rs,
 Trembling obeys the dreadful spell.
 And now their banners wave by Isis' fount.
 They pitch their tents. There to the mighty Thames,
 With sacred incense, and libations due, 31
 And offer'd hecatombs, their vows are paid.
 Slow move along the ranks the white-rob'd priests,
 Sprinkling each warrior from the fountain pure :
 And with uplifted eyes, and solemn words, 35
 Pronounce the blessing of their guardian Gods,
 Bright Venus, slaught'ring Mars, and mighty Jove,
 And

And Pallas worshipp'd by the waves of Sture *,
 And great Apollo, and majestic Thames.
 Now fable night descends, and downy sleep 40
 Folds in his soft embrace the num'rous host :
 But soon the morning dawns, the trumpets sound,
 As when some swain, with rude unpractis'd hand,
 Disturbs the nation in their waxen cells,
 Forth swarms the troubled hive : so thick the troops
 Rush from their tents: the echoing plain resounds 46
 The clang of armour, and the shouts of men.
 And now they coast the stream, which gliding smooth
 Thro' fertile vallies, washes those fair walls
 Sacred to bright-hair'd Phœbus, where three springs
 Warm'd by his rays, with wond'rous virtues blest 51
 To chase disease and pain, involv'd in mist
 Smoke on the plain, and tell th' inhabitants
 How grateful to the God their incense burns.
 Two days they march. The third, Verlucio's walls
 Receives them wearied : but the rising sun, 56
 Again reflected from their burnish'd arms,
 Beholds the moving thousands. Now they pass
 The forest † vast, which glooms an horrid shade,
 The scene of future slaughter. There the Saxon 60

* Shaftesbury, near the Sture, was anciently called Caër Paladur, or the temple of Pallas.

† Selwood.

Dy'd deep his conquering sword in British blood.
 There England wag'd with Denmark dreadful war,
 Now conquer'd, now triumphant ; Ethelred
 Now bites the ground, and noble Edmund now
 Urges o'er heaps of slain his foaming steed. 64
 But when six times the sun had ting'd with gold
 The mountain tops, chasing the damps of night,
 And now, from his meridian height declin'd,
 Down tow'rd his western goal had shap'd his course,
 They fix their station by the banks of Sture. 70
 There sheath'd in arms, with thoughts of vengeance
 fir'd,

They found the gather'd pow'rs of Deunan's vales,
 That dwell by Tamar's stream, and pleasant Teave,
 Adorn'd with waving woods, where noble Orgar
 In after days, entranc'd in holy vision, 75
 Convers'd with Heav'n ; and where the Plym, now
 join'd

With rushing Tamar, meets the ocean's foam.
 Oft on the margin of the flood, the Seer,
 Rapt in prophetic ecstasy, beheld
 Its future glories : lofty structures rise ; 80
 And on the heaving waves ride the huge bulk
 Of mighty ships, of form unknown, and stor'd
 With engines horrible, to shake beneath
 The caverns of the deep with thunder's voice,
 And

And awe with lightnings dread the subject sea. 85
Or to his wond'ring eyes confest appear'd
The awful form of Drake. On high designs
Intent, on his majestic brow were seen
Deep thought and firm resolve; and at his feet
Proud Spain lies prostrate; Mexico pours forth 90
Her wealth; and rich Peru her victor owns;
While Eastern monarchs to the hero's fame
Pay willing homage. Next, from Armè's vales,
And those fair fields which fruitful Aune divides,
Where high Saint Michael's overlooks the main, 95
Appear the warlike youth. And where the Dart,
Through his bleak mountains and his craggy rocks,
Black with loud tempests, while the rushing torrent
Defiles his waters with the soil impure
Of heathy moor, rolls his indignant course: 100
Or, ling'ring now amidst his flow'ry meads,
Shaded with woods, with fragrant myrtle grac'd,
Smooth-gliding, and reluctant seeks the sea:
From Tinga, where the fear-struck Saxon first
Beheld the fierce invaders *, issuing forth 105
From their black ships, and their portentous standard,

* The Danes first landed at Tinmouth; and the French, after the action off Beachy-Head, burnt the town and some fishing vessels in the harbour.

The magic Raven, beat the troubled air :
 And where, in later days, vain-glorious France
 Snatch'd a short triumph, soon to mourn in blood,
 When on her stormy coast the British cross 110
 Wav'd terrible, (the war brave Russell led,)
 And her proud navies in her havens flam'd.
 From Isca's banks, where the full river rolls,
 With all his tributary waters swell'd,
 And Moridunum sees her subject stream 115
 Mix with the boundless sea, the martial bands
 Advance. But from fair Mula's winding course,
 From Isca's Northern waves and Tawia's shores,
 And that high promontory, which repels
 The foaming tempests of th' Hibernian sea, 120
 Nam'd, from th' immortal son of thund'ring Jove,
 The Point of Hercules, no warriors came.
 These with incursion swift, and vantage strong,
 The foe possess'd, and crush'd the rising war.
 Nor with less ardour from the blissful seats, 125
 Where, softly-breathing from the neighbouring main,
 Reigns the warm breeze * ; where laughing Summer
 spreads
 Perpetual joy, and gaily sporting throws,

* Somersetshire has been said to have its name from the mildness of the air, viz. the land of Summer.

With lavish hand, her rosy fragrance round,
While Winter frowns in vain, the youth appear. 130
From the swift Parrett they, and fruitful Thone,
And that cloud-piercing hill, the future theme
Of many a bard ; but yet unknown to fame
Were Arthur's noble knights, and Arthur's deeds.
Six valiant Chiefs the hardy bands obey'd : 135
Assaracus, whose name proclaims his race
Deriv'd from sacred Troy. To Britain's shore
He came with Brutus. On his manly limbs
The scars of many an honourable wound
Appear'd. Though age had silver'd o'er his hair, 140
Vig'rous he seem'd, and in his sinewy grasp
Brandish'd a pond'rous spear : before his host
Erect and firm he march'd ; his armour rang.
With him his youthful son Choræbus came.
Such Paris issued from the Scæan gate, 145
When, rous'd at length to daring deeds of arms
By Hector's just reproof, and Hector's fame,
Exulting Troy the graceful Chief beheld.
Next Butes stood : skill'd with unerring aim
To lanch the jav'lin from his nervous arm. 150
Achates next ; and, matchless in the race,
Chaonian Pandrafus. Ere horrid war
Shook with his dire alarms th' astonish'd land,

In Avalon's * fair isle the hero dwelt ;
 Fair isle, fit emblem of his gen'rous mind. 155
 For these the bounteous earth spontaneous gave
 Her treasures forth. The blest inhabitant,
 Reclin'd in od'rous shades, and in the ear
 Of yielding virgin whisp'ring tales of love,
 Inhal'd the smell of flow'rs, the violet, 160
 The cowslip, which the Fairy empress loves,
 And the soft blushing rose ; with ev'ry sweet
 Which wanton Zephyr from the teeming earth
 Wins by his warm careffes. All combin'd,
 Invade the sense ; for there perpetual Spring, 165
 With Summer join'd, holds thro' the laughing year
 Delightful empire ; each luxuriant bough
 Bends with Hesperian fruit, and courts the hand ;
 While the fair blossom to the ravish'd eye
 Foretells the rich succession. Uther next, 170
 Uther, the bravest of Loëgria's chiefs,
 Advanc'd his giant limbs : great Uther, first
 In dang'rous fight, in peace the just and good.
 Awful the hero stood, by fate design'd
 The mighty father of a line of kings, 175

* The isle of Avalon is said, in old authors, to produce fruits all the year round, and corn, &c. without culture.

Of great Pendragon, and his greater son.
But Deunan's warriors noble Turon led,
And hardy Malim of Phœnician race,
And sage Mempricius, whose deep-furrow'd brow,
Thinly o'erspread with hoary hair, confess 180
The force of eighty winters. His weak arm
No longer lifts the spear, and swells the tide
Of slaughter; but in council wise, and skill'd
In all the stratagems of various war,
He guides more vig'rous youth to fair success. 185
From Ellandunum, and the fruitful shore
Of smooth Antona, and the plain where now
Fair Sarisburia's lofty spires arise;
From strong Verlucio's walls with turrets crown'd,
(Verlucio, seated by the gliding stream, 190
Amidst whose fields, with waving harvests gay,
Fair Plenty moves rejoicing,) Amber led,
In equal arms with godlike Dares join'd,
And equal sway, their yet unconquer'd bands.
Frome's rapid wave, and Durnovaria's walls, 195
And Vindogladia, and Alaunus' stream,
Send Durius, Leucon, Attys to the war.
The noble Durius in the field of death
Wields the strong lance, and rears the sev'nfold shield.
Leucon and Attys speed the flying dart, 200
Or hurl destruction from the distant sling.

Seiz'd our defenceless frontier, trusted weakly
To solemn treaties and Cornubian faith,
We saw our wealth, our cultivated plains 230
Seiz'd by th' insulting foe ; our towns in flames ;
The sacred temples of our Gods profan'd
With impious violation ! Then we wept
Upon our useless arms, which should have stream'd
With hostile blood, and with reluctant step 235
Before th' innumerable foe retir'd, not fled.
At length Loëgria's Chiefs appear in arms.
Hear then my sentence, warriors. With the dawn
Seek we the foe. I brook disgrace no more."
He ceas'd. Then rising slow, the King extends 240
His scepter'd hand, and thus dissembling speaks :
" This graceful ardour, Turon, well beseems
Thy vigorous years, and fits thy fame in arms.
Me too the voice of honourable praise
Delights : I kindle at the sound of war. 245
But ever should the ear of kings be clos'd
Against the syren Glory : then most happy,
Then greatest, when, by their paternal care
Preserv'd, their people bless their peaceful reign.
Hear then our just resolve. If thirst of wealth 250
Inflame the fierce Cornubian, and provoke
His hostile inroad on our country's peace ;
Wealth I have store. Within my spacious hall

Spoils upon spoils in glitt'ring order pil'd,
 From bleeding Greece, or from the boastful Gaul, 255
 Torn in the bloody conflict, when the might
 Of Brutus foil'd their bravest : nor alone
 The spoils by Brutus won, my sword atchiev'd
 No vulgar trophies, when the Scythian Chief
 Bow'd in the dust his warlike head. All these 260
 Freely your king shall give, and more than these,
 Resign his martial fame, to purchase peace,
 And from his people turn the rage of war.
 But who our offer to the foe shall bear ?
 Will great Assaracus, in arms renown'd ? 265
 Or sage Mempricius, from whose honied tongue
 Persuasion flows ?" He ended. With a frown
 The stern Assaracus thus answer'd fierce,
 And shook the hoary honours of his head.
 " To others, King, commit th' ungrateful task : 270
 If in the numerous host a slave be found
 So poor of soul, so lost to sense of shame.
 Degenerate Prince ! Not thus our noble fires
 Su'd to confed'rate Greece ; but with bold arms
 Repell'd her fierce assault, and ten long years 275
 Maintain'd the doubtful war with adverse Heav'n.
 Shall we, Loëgria's gather'd strength in arms,
 Purchase precarious safety, and belie
 Our honourable scars ? Go thou, base Prince !

Go ransom that unwarlike head, while we 280
By hardy daring, and illustrious deeds,
Assert our antient fame !" As when the gale
Slow rising, first invades the rustling leaves ;
Now scarcely heard, now loud, and louder still
Swells on the ear the sullen sound, prophetic 285
Of the swift-rushing tempest : as he spoke
So rose th' indignant murmur. Ev'ry Chief
Darts on the king his angry eyes. With joy
He marks their warlike ardour. Now arose
The hoary sage Mempricius, and at once 290
In mute attention all was hush'd around,
While thus experienc'd age discerning spoke.
" Blest is the monarch of the brave and free.
His throne is fix'd secure, and Fame for him
The laurel wreath prepares, th' immortal verse : 295
And blest the people, whom a prince commands
In action valiant, and in council wise.
These eyes, oh King, have seen thy crested helm
Flame like a meteor in the foremost battle ;
While, like the pestilence, thy dreadful sword 300
Made armies fall. I wish'd my years renew'd
To emulate thy daring. Yet methought
Our youth, by thy example fir'd, display'd
Their fathers' spirit, and thy soaring flight
With no unequal wing pursu'd. They burn 305
With

With thirst of glory, and demand the war.
 Ev'n hoary age beneath the pond'rous casque
 Has crush'd his furrow'd brow. Shall coward fear,
 Thought of precarious peace, and purchas'd safety,
 Possess Loëgria, when Fame sounds th' alarm, 310
 And Locrine leads the battle? Monarch, no.
 Prove in the field our faith. Yet hear my counsel.
 Pallas inspires my tongue. From Humber's stream,
 The winding course of Trent, and where the Thames
 Rolls his full tribute to the Eastern main; 315
 Ten thousand warriors by Elanius led,
 Morindus, Elidurus, and the might
 Of Britomarus, now with rapid march
 Advance; and ere six times the sun has dipp'd
 His flaming axle in the Western wave, 320
 Their friendly banners, and their glitt'ring arms,
 Shall greet our eyes. Let some illustrious Chief
 Of high command, in solemn embassy
 Approach Cornubia's Leaders, thence to note
 Their posture, strength, and number; (To prevail
 By fraud or force, alike is victory.) 325
 The cause of their fierce inroad to demand;
 And with fair shew of words, and specious gloss,
 Or else with terms allure, and proffer'd treaty,
 To some suspense of war. So may our vengeance
 Pour on their heads inevitable ruin." 331

Thus

Thus spake the wily Chief. The King approv'd,
 Mempricius, Malim, Galgacus, receive
 The royal mandate. To the hostile camp
 They bend their course : the heralds march before.
 Beyond the hills of Mendip, (where the soil 336
 The grass nutritious, and the fragrant herb,
 Yields rarely, but the ore of useful lead
 Repays with wealth immense the searchers toil,
 And the fam'd cavern *, from whose mouth the
 voice 340

Of Fate oft speaks in thunder, or compell'd
 With mystic rites, and spells of dreadful pow'r,
 The regions of the gloomy dead give up
 Their dreadful secrets, had Cornubia pass'd,
 Vainly presumptuous, deeming to surprize 345
 With swift incursion, in his secret bower
 By Avon, and the stream to future times
 By Sabra's fate renown'd, th' unguarded King.
 But now the scouts report, the gather'd pow'rs
 From Tamar to Alaunus, by the wave 350
 Of Sture encamp'd, and Locrine's rapid march.
 Cornubia's Chief, Belinus, to Corineus
 By kindred race allied, by friendship more ;
 Strait gives command, and with converted ensigns

* Okey Hole.

The host moves onward, with impetuous course. 355
 And now Ebrancus to the right his station
 Fixes against the stream, which winding flows
 By sacred Glastonbury, and the isle
 Of fabled Avalon, and seeks the sea.
 Hymner, Vigenius, Elidaucus, plant 360
 Their banners on the left, where its dark shade
 The forest spreads *. The middle space the bands
 By Danius, Lago, and Molmutius led ;
 And those which under brave Rudaucus came ;
 Andragius, Urianus, and the strength 365
 Of Brennus, fam'd for many an hardy deed,
 Possess'd. With these in arms the marshal'd pow'rs
 Of Capis, Ænus, and Bleduno join.
 Catellus, and Gerontius, Leoline
 By Pallas lov'd, the prudent and the brave. 370
 And young Sifilius, whose well-practis'd limbs
 Oft on the sand the sinewy wrestler foil'd.
 And huge Gorbodion, fam'd for brutal strength,
 But headstrong, fierce, inexorable : war
 His sole delight, to cruel deeds inur'd. 375
 Maglaunus, Peridurus : one on foot
 Shakes in the foremost rank his mighty spear,
 While two proud courfers, like the winds in speed,

* Selwood.

Whirl bold Maglaunus o'er th' ensanguin'd plain,
Thron'd in the glitt'ring car. Now great Belinus
Darts o'er the growing camp his watchful eye, 381
And bids his legions round the vast extent
Raise the high rampart. In the trench profound,
Compell'd from his accustom'd bed, the stream
Reluctant flows. Each to his several post 385
The stated guards repair, and in six bands
Six valiant Chiefs obey : Gorbodion, Capys,
Vigenius, Lago, godlike Leoline,
And Elidaucus, gay with golden arms.

And now Loëgria's embassy approach'd 390
Where Leoline held watch. The Chief, who saw
The heralds' holy ensigns, and the troop
Few and unarm'd, springs from the mound, and bids
Unbar the massy gates ; then mildly thus :
“ Whoe'er ye be, that thus in friendly guise 395
Approach our lines, by holy heralds led ;
Fearless advance, and freely speak your purpose.
Dear to the Gods, who see with pitying eyes
Man's wretched race, as emulous of woe,
Rushing with frantic rage to mutual slaughter, 400
Ye come, perhaps, the messengers of peace.”
Mempricius thus replies. “ Yes, generous Chief,
Whose prudent words bespeak a noble mind,
We come, indeed, the messengers of peace,

From

From kingly Locrine, whose paternal eye 405
 Grieving beholds the ills which threat his people.
 Then lead us to Belinus, and convene
 Cornubia's heroes, that th' assembled council
 May learn our Monarch's worth, and War no more
 To impious fury urge our kindred swords." 410
 He ended. Leoline thus answer'd glad.
 "Whate'er thy message, be it peace or war,
 We know, and we respect the sacred laws
 Which Heav'n prescribes the nations. Of safe con-
 duct,
 And all observance meet, proceed secure. 415
 If peace thou bring'st, most welcome: for we draw
 The sword of Justice, not of wild Ambition."
 So saying, on he march'd: Loëgria's heroes
 Pursue his steps. The great Belinus now
 Summons the leaders. His capacious tent 420
 Receives the warlike train. High-thron'd o'er all
 Appears their injur'd Queen, and by her side
 Her blooming son. In royal state she fate;
 For since Persephone's relentless power
 Extinguish'd great Corineus' noble life, 425
 To her, his daughter, and her youthful Madan,
 His people vow'd their homage. Next the throne
 Belinus stood: the rest in order round.
 Loëgria's Chiefs advance: Mempricius thus

With

With studied speech the purpos'd fraud pursues. 430

“ Princes, and leaders of Cornubia's pow'rs,
And thou great Queen, before whose awful throne
We bow submissive: may th' immortal Gods,
Upon whose nod the fates of empire wait,
And kingdoms rise or fall, give to our words 435
Persuasion's winning charms; those charms which
smooth

The brow of Wrath, and of his cruel purpose
Beguile Revenge! so may impartial Reason
Decide between us, and the scourge of war
Pass from the nations! War, remorseless power, 440
Furious and blind, as violence or chance
Impels, confers the palm; and on the ground
Humbling the just, bids Pride and Falsehood rise
On conquest's eagle pinion. But unblam'd
May we declare our message, and against 445
The throned state of sov'reign Majesty
Urge our bold charge, as sacred Justice bids?
Conscious of right, to you, illustrious Chiefs,
The King submits his cause.” Belinus then:
“ Not urg'd by lust of war, nor blind obedience 450
To pow'r superior, sheath'd in arms we stand;
But foes to lawless Force, and proud Oppression.
Patient we hearken to thy pleaded reason.”
Mempricius now resumes. “ Thus Locrine bids.

Say

Say to Cornubia, o'er our peaceful realm 455
 Why have your threat'ning armies pour'd dismay?
 If we have exil'd from our throne and bed
 The haughty Guendolen, our kingly pow'r
 Might well, dependent on no foreign state,
 Refuse th' account; but mov'd by love of peace, 460
 And arm'd by justice, we provoke the trial.
 Stand forth that guilty woman, whose vile arts
 With spells, and dark conspiracy, assail'd
 Her husband's throne and life. Before Cornubia
 Our proofs produc'd shall vouch the charge: sub-
 mission, 465
 If lightly urg'd, atone. Or will she dare,
 By white-rob'd priests in solemn order led,
 Approach the charmed rock, which from its base
 Self-mov'd inclines, when truth is near, and Heav'n
 To witness call? Till then suspend the war." 470
 Mempricius ceas'd; and thus the Queen replied,
 While from her eyes affronted innocence
 Flash'd lightnings. "Yes, we court the awful trial.
 Connubial Juno, hear! hear, mighty Jove!
 Hear, righteous Themis! for you know my truth. 475
 If without murmur, while my swelling heart
 Almost to bursting throb'd with anguish keen,
 To have sustain'd my wrongs: If to have wept
 My lonely nights upon a widow'd bed,

Yet

Yet taught my languid cheek to wear a smile 480
 When next we met, though cold aversion scowl'd
 Upon his alter'd brow : If to have waited
 With fondest love and most attentive duty
 Upon his will, and hop'd by patient bearing
 To win upon his heart, and move his pity : 485
 If this be dark conspiracy, if this
 Be proud rebellion, I indeed am guilty.
 Alas ! and what has been the meed of patience ?
 Repeated insult, hard, unfeeling insult.
 And, when exhausted cruelty supplied 490
 No fiercer torture, last, disgraceful exile
 And stand'rous accusation." More, in grief
 And bitterness of soul, she would have said ;
 When brave Ebrancus, starting from the crowd,
 Thus spoke indignant : " Mighty Queen, forbear.
 We know thy virtues, and the tyrant's guilt. 496
 Ev'n now, while here his solemn embassy
 Mocks us with promise fair, and shew of peace,
 And dares invoke th' immortal Gods to witness :
 His impious arts, his base dissimulation, 500
 Those injur'd Gods detect. The fraud is plain.
 And does he deem us then so weak of mind,
 Such easy novices, that, sooth'd by words,
 We shall unbrace our armour, and lay by
 Our righteous swords, which sacred Justice draws ?
 Suspend the war ? What, till th' extended realm 506

Which owns his sway, from all her provinces
 Pours forth her armed sons to fight his battles?
 No, let Cornubia back return defiance,
 And hostile scorn. Ev'n now, our spies report, 510
 Ten thousand warriors from their northern confines,
 From Medway's banks, and Thames' majestic wave,
 Urge their swift march. Retire, Loëgrian Chiefs,
 Your arts avail not. On your camp we pour
 Instant the vengeance of our injur'd Queen, 515
 If great Belinus give our fury way."

Ebrancus thus. Belinus thus replied :

" Well hast thou spoke, chief of Cornubian heroes,
 Still first in action, still in council wise.

Mempricius, tell your King, his shallow arts 520

Protect his guilt no more, but by his sword
 His safety must be purchas'd. Thy weak age
 May need refreshment. Venerable man,

Enter our tent, and share the genial feast,

Thou and thy brave companions. Many a Chief 526
 To-morrow gluts the rage of sanguine war.

Then we may meet as foes. To-night at least
 Accept the honours due to age and thee."

" No; to the King," the hoary warrior said,

" We bear thy answer; what the morn shall bring
 We mourn, but fear not." Now the council rose.

Through all th' extended camp the troops indulge
 The banquet, till the shades of night descend.

Not

Not so the mournful Guendolen. Retir'd,
Now flow her sorrows, now uncheck'd burst forth
Her sighs. Grief in her heaving bosom reigns 536
Despotic, nor admits divided sway.

And as from vernal skies the sudden show'r
Descends; or when beneath stern Winter's reign,
All white with hoary frost, stands some old oak, 540
The monarch of the woods; touch'd by the beam
Of Phœbus, from th' innumerable boughs distils
The copious moisture: down her faded cheek
So tear succeeding tear incessant stream'd.

"Alas!" she cried, "and shall the rising sun 545
See hostile nations in fierce conflict join,
And the pure stream run purple with the blood
Of heroes, in my fatal quarrel slain?

Can love be won by cruel deeds of arms?
Can war's fell power rekindle soft desire? 550
Loathing I turn from the detested scene.

Oh be my witness, Heaven! not to me
Revenge is dear. For thee, for thee, my Locrine,
Though false, yet lov'd, pleas'd would I yield my
life.

But love and hope to me are lost for ever. 555

Me, wretched widow! Yet my husband lives,
Oh depth of misery! he lives another's.
Oh when shall I find refuge in the grave?
When close my weary eyes in death? In death

52 THE REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

We know no grief, no pangs of slighted love." 560
 Then, as she press'd to her maternal bosom
 Her darling son, who, by her anguish mov'd,
 Now join'd his tears with her's, "Alas! my child,
 Robb'd of thy birthright, thou art exil'd too.
 Oh boy, thou might'st have been a glorious king.
 Who shall protect thee now? Thy cruel father, 566
 Thy father is thy foe: and a vile Scythian
 Upon the throne of Brutus (thine, my child,)
 Shall sit, and mock thy suff'rings. Oh, for thee,
 For thee alone I live; and but for thee, 570
 Consign'd for ever to th' oblivious tomb,
 My vengeance and my woes had slept together."
 Her thus complaining, pitying Heav'n beholds,
 Beholds, and on her aching temples sheds
 The healing dew of sleep; for wearied now 575
 Nature no more sustains her toil, but sinks
 Exhausted. On the couch her graceful limbs
 Are stretch'd supine. Meanwhile her spirit free
 Expatriates, led by Gods, in fields of air,
 And in ecstatic vision dimly sees 580
 The glories of her race—a line of kings
 From Madan sprung. Now the warm ray of hope
 Plays on her breast, and midst her peaceful slumbers
 The smile of joy her languid cheek illumines.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

THE

THE
R E V E N G E
O F
G U E N D O L E N.

B O O K I I I.

MEANWHILE despairing on her sleepless
couch

Estroldis lies, and tears her cheeks bedew.
Forc'd from her head, the regal ornaments
Now foil their glitt'ring beauties in the dust.
And oft she smites her breast, and tears her hair, 5
And now the justice of the Gods arraigns,
And now implores their mercy ; but stern Fate,
Her wild reproaches, and her fruitless pray'rs,
Scatters in empty air. Th' attendant train
Partake her sorrows, and the vaulted roof, 10

Vocal with song no more, or jocund sound
Of wanton revel, rings with loud lament.

Ev'n Boarex, absorb'd in fullen grief,

Sits silent, and her baffled art deplores.

As when, of some proud city, girt with siege, 15

The forceful engine, or slow-working sap,

Has shook the lofty rampart, which now bows

From its foundations, then with thund'ring sound

Rushing, spreads wide its ruins : now appear

The streets fair opening, rich with glitt'ring fanes,

And pillar'd domes, and fire the fierce assailants 21

With the near view of plunder : here a band,

Pale with disease, and worn with toil, extend

Their feeble spears ; despair is all their strength.

But far within, a lamentable train, 25

The timid virgin, and the widow'd matron,

And feeble age, and helpless infancy,

Cling to the altars, piercing oft the air,

Responsive to the dreadful notes without,

With fearful shrieks, as near, and now more near 30

The victors shout, and dying groans arise.

Such was the general woe. For Hope no more

Dispers'd her sweet illusions. Dark despair,

And sacred horror ev'ry bosom fill'd,

Since that sad hour, when flush'd with expectation,

The eager step of fair Estrildis fought 36

The solemn grove, where Scythian Boarex

Adjur'd

Adjur'd with mystic verse th' infernal Pow'rs.

'Twas when the silent night in shadowy veil
Had wrapp'd the face of Nature : softly sigh'd 40

The Western breeze, responsive to the strain
Of the lorn Nightingale : in cloudless majesty,
Amidst her starry train, the Queen of Night
Pursu'd her course rejoicing ; shedding soft
Her silv'ry light on hill and grove : the earth 45
Blesses her gentle sway ; and every herb

That drinks the dew, each flow'r, and fragrant
shrub,

With grateful incense scents the passing air.

Then Boarex, th' impatient Fair address'd.

" Behold, the season calls us. Now the Pow'rs, 50
Propitious most, to mortal pray'rs attend.

Seek we the deep recesses of the grove,

There learn the will of Fate." She said ; Estrildis

Replied not, but with hasty step advanc'd,

And beating heart. But ere the rites began, 55

Thus, as she pensive at the altar stood,

The mistress of the spell address'd the Queen.

" Oh daughter, now with courage arm thy soul :

For dreadful are the rites ; dreadful the Gods ;

Horrid their gloomy dwelling. The weak sense 60
Of mortals the dire vision scarce sustains."

Then rais'd her magic wand, and with fix'd eye

Intent, mutter'd the mystic verse, and trac'd

Upon the yielding sand the pow'rful spell.
 And now the altars blaze, and now begins 65
 The sacrifice, to Earth, to Night, and Hell,
 Strange, bloody, horrible ! whence Nature starts
 Shudd'ring, nor dares the trembling Muse relate ;
 Lest at the monstrous tale, the curdling blood
 Should freeze, or frenzy fire the madding brain. 70
 Less dreadful that Thyeftean banquet, where
 The fun recoil'd affrighted, measuring back
 His heav'nly journey. Sinking with her fears,
 Half dead, Estrildis stood, and with both hands
 Press'd to her eyes the veil. The lab'ring moon 75
 Grows pale and dim ; the stars retire ; and now
 The blast howls dismal ; now the gather'd clouds
 Roll on their gloomy volumes : darkness shrouds
 The earth, and heaven's blue vault appears no
 more.

Such horrid darkness, when the hour is near, 80
 Shall to the nations of the world foretell
 The wreck of Nature. Now the lightnings glare
 Frequent : now rolls the thunder : peals on peals
 Redoubled roar : trembles the solid earth.
 The Sorc'ers midst the tempest stands unmov'd, 85
 And waves her wand, and chants the dreadful
 charm.

Now shakes the forest : now the lofty oak
 Bows in the dust his head : the mountain nods

With

With all his rocks, and all his torrents hurls
A deluge on the plain : the rocking ground 90
Is mov'd beneath, as when the force of winds
Heaves the vast bosom of the mighty deep :
The cleft earth yawns, and from the dreadful chasm,
Burst flames : now horrid shrieks are heard, the yell
Of torture : now appears the drear abode 95
Of Hela, the dark mansions of the dead.
There all the dreadful ministers of vengeance ;
There Slaughter, dropping blood ; there fell Disease ;
There Madness ; there the Furies ; there Revenge ;
There proud Contention ; fierce Pursuit is there ; 100
There Jealousy, terrific spectre ! there
Pale Famine's meagre form ; there fell Despair ;
And there the dreadful Deities *, who weave
The fatal web, of human entrails made ;
The web of Victory : the weights below 105
The heads of gasping warriors. Streaming blood
Smokes on the fiery soil beneath. They ply
Their horrid toil incessant, hymning still
Terrific strains, that doom the death of heroes.
Dire was their aspect : not portentous Gorgon 110
More dismal frowns. Undaunted, fearless yet,
Confiding in her charms, the Scythian cries,
" Obey, ye gloomy Pow'rs, obey the spell !

* The Valkyriur, or Chusers of the Slain. See Gray's Poems.

Give victory !" Now deeper thunders roll'd :
 Hell grew more dreadful : bick'ring flames shot
 forth, 115

Wreath'd with dark clouds of smoke. Then first
 The Sorcerers knew fear : and then a voice,
 More loud than shouting armies, or the roar
 Of the vex'd seas, with rushing storms combin'd,
 Broke on her ear. " Oh insolent and vain ! 120
 Shall mortals then prescribe the course of Fate ?
 Thou who would'st pierce the secrets of the Gods,
 Hear thou, and tremble. Miserable wretch,
 What is thy boasted art ? Their instruments
 To work their firm, inscrutable decrees. 125

The meek and humble mind the fav'ring Pow'rs
 Well-pleas'd behold. Rebellious arrogance
 At length their thunder visits. Seek no more
 What known will curse thee. The dread Pow'rs of
 Hell

What force can bind ? what pray'rs or tears can
 move ?" 130

Terrific Mists spoke, and at her voice
 Hell shakes, and Earth and Heav'n recoil dismay'd.
 Now fled the horrid vision. The rude storm
 Is hush'd : no more the thunder rolls : the stream
 Glides in its wonted bed ; and the fair moon, 135
 With all her starry train, again shines forth.
 Again the soft-complaining Nightingale

Breathes

Breathes heav'nly music on the ear of Night.
But prone on earth the miserable Queen,
Pale, motionless, almost of sense bereav'd, 140
Lay chill'd with terror ; when with trembling step,
And fault'ring tongue, sad Boarex approach'd,
She rais'd the mourner's head, and fondly tried
(Tho' from her breast unbidden burst the sigh,
And oft the starting tear was check'd in vain,) 145
With soothing words to cheer her fainting soul.
" Daughter, restrain thy sorrows," (thus she cried,)
" The spell has lost its force, but the dread Gods,
Mov'd by the voice of pray'r, and milder rites,
Perhaps will bend relenting. Heard'st thou not 150
That awful voice—' The meek and humble mind
' The Pow'rs well-pleas'd behold ? ' Approach we
then
Suppliant the altar ; groveling on the ground,
Wetting the earth with tears, with frequent sighs
Moving the air, and beat our wretched breasts, 155
And rend our scatter'd hair. No other hope,
No other refuge now remains, if pray'rs,
And tears, and sighs, are pour'd to Heav'n in vain."
She said, and with disorder'd step and look
Mov'd to the altar, which her hands so late 160
With impious rites, and horrid sacrifice,
Polluted, and with pure ablutions cleans'd
From blood ; then heap'd with incense, and applied
The

The fire. Now rolling in the dust, she pray'd,
 She wept: Estrildis answer'd groan for groan, 165
 And clasp'd her hands in speechless agony,
 And beat her breast, and rent her scatter'd hair,
 And pray'd, and wept, and sigh'd. But tears, and
 pray'rs,

And sighs, are pour'd in vain. The struggling
 flame

Sinks down, and now involv'd in smoke expires. 170
 Signs from above ensu'd, Earth groan'd beneath,
 Blue lightnings gleam'd, and thunder shook the sky.

Then vanish'd every hope: then silent Grief,
 And black Despair's impenetrable gloom,
 Possess'd them whole. With feeble step, and flow,
 They quit the fatal place. Th' attendant train 176
 Behold amaz'd their alter'd looks, that shone
 So late with airy hope, and festive joy;

Nor dare the cause explore. Now all around
 That favour'd bow'r, where Nature vied with Art,
 Where Cupids sported in each balmy breeze, 181
 And Pleasure led the jocund hours along,
 Pale Sorrow reigns, and shrieks are heard of woe.

As some fond mother, o'er her darling child,
 (When now the pale consumption on its youth 185
 Untimely preys, and the worn lungs refuse
 Their office) hangs in speechless agony,
 Marking the slow approach of death; and now

Bathes

Bathes its wan cheek with tears ; on its pale lips
Prints kisses ; and if chance a transient glow 190
The flushing fever spreads, her eager hope
Deems it the promise of returning health :
But soon the fond delusive hope expires ;
Tears stream afresh ; and with more dreadful sway
Despair again comes rushing on her soul. 195
So mourn'd Estrildis for her vanish'd joys,
And with such horrors view'd impending fate.

Loëgria's envoys now had reach'd their camp,
And to their King announc'd approaching war.
Then rose th' undaunted Chief, and forth he mov'd
Majestic. In his hand the sceptre shone, 201
Ensign of high command, and from his helm,
Dreadful with nodding plumes, quick lightnings
flash'd.

Earth shook beneath him. At his word, the sound
Of clanging trumpets bids the troops repair 205
Each to his standard. Now the echoing plain,
Throng'd with the moving thousands, seems on
fire :

So thick the polish'd helms, and blazing shields
Reflect the sun's declining rays. He mounts
His high tribunal, thence awhile surveys 210
The host, then awful rises. On their King
They gaze with wond'ring eyes. He seems a God.
As when the Father of the tuneful strain,

Sprung

Sprung from the Muse, whom all the Muse inspir'd,
 Threïcian Orpheus, on the rugged brow 215
 Of Rhodope or Hæmus first appear'd :
 By thousands and ten thousands, from their caves,
 And gloomy forests, the rude nations flock'd,
 With fond devotion to the moral lay
 Attentive, while their bosoms catch the flame 220
 Of virtue, till that hour unknown to man :
 Not with less awe Loëgria's armed sons
 Gaze on their Chief, and from his eagle eye,
 And bold demeanour, in their kindling souls
 Imbibe heroic ardour. " Warlike Chiefs, 225
 Support and glory of Loëgria's throne,
 (The king exclaims,) these firm, well-order'd ranks,
 Their prompt obedience, and their eager zeal,
 Proclaim your martial skill, your faith unshaken.
 To sheath the ruthless sword of civil slaughter, 230
 To spare my people, with paternal care
 In vain I strove. Insatiable ambition,
 And lawless force, nor nature's sacred ties
 Restrain, nor pleaded justice. Fierce Cornubia
 Points at a kindred breast the guilty steel. 235
 I fondly hop'd to have reserv'd your fire
 For nobler deeds. O'er other worlds to spread
 Our Trojan name, with other trophies grac'd.
 Not so the Gods decree. No more I check
 Your ardour. Let the morning's orient beam 240
 Play

Play on your armour, moving to the fight.
Brave must he be, and of no vulgar force,
To whom your Chief shall yield the prize of fame.
There, where the plumage of my crested helm
Shakes o'er the breaking squadrons wild dismay, 245
There fix your eyes ; be that your guiding star,
Secure it leads to conquest and to fame."

He ceas'd. From man to man, from rank to rank,
Spreads swift applause : a murm'ring sound arose,
Like billows breaking on the distant shore, 250
Or winds that sing along the narrow vale,
By two cloud-piercing mountains form'd, whose sides
Rugged with rocks, and dark with woods, appear
To threaten fierce encounter. Now the Leaders,
Approaching, hear the King's command. The troops
Divide: these marching to their tents prepare 256
Their evening banquet. Their allotted posts,
From space to space, along th' extended rampart,
The guards possess. Of these a chosen band,
By Dares, Leucon, Ilus, Chiefs of name, 260
Conducted, far beyond the trench encamp,
And spread their watchful scouts around, to mark
The foe, if in their guarded tents they pass
The hours of night, or with excursion swift
Attempt surprize. But in the royal tent 265
The Leaders meet. Meanwhile th' attendant train
With

With dainties heap the board ; the golden bowl
 Foams with the generous wine ; to Jove they pour
 Libation, and indulge the genial feast :
 Nor wanted tuneful harp, nor sacred song. 270
 Above the rest the tuneful Bard appears.
 He sung the noble deeds of other days,
 The glory of their fathers. Fix'd around
 In mute attention fate the kindling heroes ;
 And as the mighty master touch'd the lyre, 275
 Their glowing bosoms heave with thirst of praise.
 From sacred Troy the lofty strain began,
 When fierce Minerva wrapp'd her walls in flames.
 And next he sang, whom Juno's wrath pursu'd *,
 Unnumber'd perils destin'd to sustain, 280
 Now tost by tempests, now by arms assail'd ;
 Till, led by fate to Latium's promis'd shore,
 Th' Ausonian bride his finish'd toil rewards.
 But when the Sire of Gods, by Venus mov'd,
 In the blest synod of th' eternal Pow'rs, 285
 Receiv'd the favour'd hero, where he sits
 With great Alcides, Jove's all-conqu'ring son,
 Grac'd with immortal youth, Ascanius fill'd
 The Latian throne. And now the Poet sung
 Silvius, enamour'd of the beauteous dame. 290

* Æneas.

The beauteous dame deriv'd her race divine
From Faunus, long in Latian realms ador'd,
And hoary Saturn, Jove's immortal Sire.
They lov'd in secret, till her swelling waist
Their stolen joys betray'd. Then prophets sung 295
Portentous strains. At length, foredoom'd the bane
Of those who gave him life, a guiltless parricide,
Sprung into light the fatal babe. Amidst
Lucina's throes the mother dies; the fire,
Pierc'd in the silvan chace, distains with blood 300
His son's keen arrow, by the Furies turn'd
Wide from its aim. For this disastrous deed
The son, ill-fated, fled th' Ausonian reign,
And roam'd an exile in a foreign land,
In far Chaonia. There, by thirst of fame 305
Impell'd, and fir'd to high, heroic deeds,
He glean'd the relics of the Trojan name,
And shook astonish'd Greece with dire alarms.
Thence led by Heav'n his vent'rous sails unfurl'd,
And prest the bosom of the stormy deep, 310
A new Æneas. Now with daring prow,
Full of the God, he stems the raging wave;
Now dyes with hostile blood th' Iberian strand;
Now proud with Gallic spoils. At length appears
The Western isle, the period of his toils: 315
For thus from Leogecia's holy fane,

(Fair Leogecia, once to Cynthia dear,
 Till, rous'd to vengeance by an impious race,
 She whelm'd the bloomy region in the main.)
 The virgin Huntress spoke the will of fate: 320
 " Amidst the Western waves, an isle explore,
 There fix thy empire, Brutus, and thy name.
 There thro' Futurity's dim mists I see
 A mighty nation, great in arts and arms;
 O'ercome by whose transcendent glory, fades 325
 The promis'd lustre of the Roman name.
 Hail, happy Britain! hail, belov'd of Heav'n!
 Immortal mother of the brave and free!"
 Thus spoke the Goddess of the fatal bow;
 Nor were her oracles believ'd in vain: 330
 For as the fleet approach'd the destin'd shore,
 The winds were hush'd, and every heaving wave
 Subsid'd. Mov'd by some superior Pow'r,
 (As if the Genius of the land confess'd
 Its future lords) the prows divide the deep, 335
 Nor urg'd by founding oar nor swelling sail.
 Then fierce Bellona shakes her flaming brand,
 And dreadful deeds are done. In horrent arms
 Stood the proud foe: their stature reach'd the sky.
 Not that Titanian race more fell, who heap'd 340
 Pelion on Ossa, and defy'd the Highest.
 Then rush to war the martial race of Troy;

There

There great Affaracus, brave Turon there,
And there Corineus wields his fatal lance :
There Brutus like a God appears ; and now 345
Directs the storm, and marks the course of death ;
Now lifts his mighty arm, and hurls his thunder.
The savage foe fled howling to their hills,
And trembled in their rocky caves. Their hills,
Their rocky caves are storm'd ; nor more secure 350
The forests' gloomy depth. Fair Peace at length
Receives the warriors in her soft embrace,
And Ceres crowns their fields. Another Troy
Now rises, empress of the Western world.
Her lofty structures, and her glitt'ring fanes, 355
The mighty stream, that rolls majestic by,
Surveys, exulting in his future fame.
But now the Bard awakens all his fires,
And sweeps with bolder rage the sounding strings ;
Invokes the Muse to aid his daring song, 360
And feels the Goddess present at his call.
With glowing bosom, and with sparkling eyes,
The Monarch listen'd to the lofty strain.
He sung the hero of the frozen North,
Now pouring dreadful from a thousand ships 365
His savage warriors on Albania's shore.
How fierce the conflict, by the foaming main,
When Britain fled, and Albanact expir'd !
Mount, haughty Scythian, mount thy lofty decks,

And spread each canvas to the fav'ring gale. 370
Behold, he comes, the great avenger comes,
Like Phœbus, dreadful with his silver bow,
When from Olympus, clad in gloomy night,
Fierce he descends, and blasts the guilty world
With pestilence. Now swells the shout of war, 375
The tumult thickens, and the combat burns :
Mars bathes in human blood ; the dismal field
Is wrapp'd in darkness, and a sanguine cloud ;
O'er heaps of slain the foaming river roars ;
And Jove with thunder rends the troubled air. 380
Fierce in the van the dreadful Chief appears,
Victorious Locrine, Brutus' matchless son ;
Through breaking ranks his furious course he drives,
And slaughter'd heroes strew the plain beneath.
Before him moves his brother's gloomy shade, 385
And bares his recent wound, and points the foe.
Then flies the spear, and then the mighty falls.
As when some haughty Chief, his foe subdu'd,
The captive navy in proud triumph leads,
And rashly boasts unconquerable force : 390
Sudden the hurricane descends : the sea
Roars dreadful, and a foaming deluge hurls
Upon the bursting decks : the shatter'd ships
Yield to the storm, and the remorseless deep
Howls, closing o'er their masts : So Humber falls,
And all his boasted triumphs are no more. 396

In

In vain Eſtrildis for her fire's return
Prepares the grateful bath, and ſpreads the board ;
Her fire returns not, pale and cold in death.

Thus ſung the Bard, and wak'd the rage of war.
Each beating boſom claim'd the promis'd fight : 401
Each ardent warrior graſp'd his ſhining ſhield,
And pois'd the ſpear, or half unſheath'd the ſword;
Anxious they with the morning's riſing light,
And dreams of conqueſt in their fancy play. 405
In thought they ſee Cornubia's baffled pow'rs
By pale confuſion ſeiz'd, and wild diſmay,
While fierce behind incens'd Loëgria ſtorms.
Oh blind to fate ! what ſhades of heroes ſlain
The morn ſhall ſend to Pluto's dreary coaſts ! 410
How many widows mourn their ſlaughter'd lords,
While ſad Loëgria bleeds at ev'ry vein !
Buoy'd by preſumptuous pride, in vain they hope
For heav'nly aid in an unrighteous cauſe ;
But confident in ſtrength, nor victims ſlain, 415
Nor vows, nor pray'rs, appeaſe th' offended Pow'rs.

THE
R E V E N G E
O F
G U E N D O L E N.

B O O K IV.

NOW earth was wrapp'd in night, and with
soft hand
Sleep shed o'er human woe his balmy dew.
But where, surrounded by his vassal Gods,
The mighty Father of the battle sits,
In golden goblets quaffing generous wine *, 5
The heav'nly synod meets. The sounding hall
Unfolds her countless gates, and shakes throughout
With thronging feet, and din of clattering arms.

* Odin is thus described by the Northern Mythologists.

Before the throne of Odin rang'd appear

The ministers of his almighty will. 10

There stood the Destinies *, whose piercing eyes

The past, the present, and the future view ;

And, on the Father's fovereign nod intent,

Mark as he bids, in their eternal roll,

The chequer'd course of man's eventful life. 15

Next these, the dreadful Sisters †, they who bathe

In blood, by whom the warring heroes fall.

Each in her right sustain'd the pond'rous spear,

And from her left the polish'd shield display'd

Portentous splendor. On each gloomy brow 20

Frown'd the fierce rage of war, the lust of slaughter ;

And by the side of each a lofty steed,

Caparison'd and harness'd for the fight,

Appear'd, in colour like the solemn night,

When with collected vapours wintry storms 25

Have quench'd the lunar ray, and veil'd the stars :

Whose eyes shot lightnings ; wreaths of curling
smoke

Roll'd from whose nostrils, mix'd with bickering
flames ;

And from whose flanks a pair of mighty wings

* The name of the Nornir, or Parcæ of the Northern nations, signified the past, present, and future.

† The Valkyriur, or Chusers of the Slain.

Stretch'd far their shadows, upon which upborne 30
The Sisters ride the tempest, when the Sire
Spreads o'er a thousand realms the waste of war.
High in the midst appear'd the sovereign throne
Flaming with gold, and rich with glitt'ring gems ;
And all around the blaze of polish'd steel, 35
Swords, lances, shields, pour'd in exhaustless stream
Unutterable splendor ; to sustain
Whose fierceness the frail sense of mortal fight
Must fail. With honours scarce inferior grac'd,
Beside the Father, the majestic Queen 40
His fruitful spouse was plac'd, and next to her
The thunder-bearing Thor, their conqu'ring son.
On either hand, in equal ranks dispos'd,
Eight golden thrones sustain'd in awful state
As many Deities. Now all were met, 45
All but the guard of that celestial fort *
Which fronts the wond'rous bridge, whose pow'r
controuls
Heav'n's furious foes, and awes the Giant crew.
Myriads of spirits of inferior class
Throng in th' exterior courts, and mighty Chiefs, 50

* Heimdall. The principal Gods of the Northern Mythology were twelve in number. The Giants were the perpetual enemies of the Gods. See Northern Antiquities.

Renown'd in arms, in glorious battle slain *.

Now roll'd the thunder ; now the lightning glares,
And from the caverns of the gloomy North
Rush forth the tempests. Now the vaulted roof
Shakes through each vast recess, each pillar'd ile ; 55
And moving with the blast, the shields, the
swords,

In glitt'ring order beaming from the walls,
Clash horrible. The ministers of fate
Know the dire signs of Odin's wrath awak'd,
Spring to their steeds, and shake their threat'ning
spears. 60

Before the throne a form majestic stands ;
His batter'd armour, and his riven shield
Yet stain'd with blood, proclaim his glorious toils
In many a well-fought field ; but on his breast
Appears the semblance of a ghastly wound, 65
And discontent frowns on his fullen brow.
“ How long,” he cries, “ is Humber doom'd to
mourn ?

How long defrauded of his just revenge ?”
Then with a voice that shook the vaulted heav'n,
And mov'd the firm foundations of the world, 70

* All who died in battle had immediate admission to the hall of Odin.

The Sire of Gods replies : " My son *, thy pray'r
 Is heard ; the promis'd vengeance comes at length.
 Go forth, ye Sisters, urge your winged steeds,
 And bid the dreadful Goddesses of the dead,
 The gloomy Hela, all her flames prepare, 75
 Wake all her horrors, all her Furies rouse.
 Bid the sad subjects of her mournful reign
 Forget their pains awhile, to meet their guest ;
 Such as before ne'er trod that horrid soil,
 One great in arms, with wreaths of conquest
 crown'd." 80

Swift at the word the dreadful Sisters flew,
 Where the nine portals of the drear abode
 Arise, and, seated on her ebon throne,
 The gloomy Goddess reigns in dreadful pomp,
 And gluts her cruel ears with cries and groans. 85
 She hears with joy, if joy in hell can be.
 The Dog of Darkness spreads his fangs †, sets wide
 His jaws, distilling foam and human blood,
 And hopes the prey. The Furies howl applause.
 Wak'd by the circling hours, the rosy dawn 90
 Beam'd from the glowing East. Now Hell unfolds

* All the Princes of the Gothic nations were fond of deriving their descent from Odin.

† He fed upon the lives of the slain.

Her gates, and, riding on the storm, rush forth
 The dreadful Sisters. As they move, the air
 Is darken'd, and the conscious earth beneath
 Shakes to its center. Now upon the banks 95
 Of Sture, they cease their flight, and lift their voice.
 Rous'd by the thrilling sound, both armies start
 From sleep, and on the echoing plain pour forth
 Their myriads. Helms on helms, and shields on
 shields,

In long succession. Throng'd with glitt'ring spears 100
 The plain appears to move. As when the gale,
 When now rich Autumn's hand has ting'd the fields
 Through all their wide extent with golden hues,
 Sweeps o'er the rip'ning grain; now here now there
 Impell'd, as Zephyrus or Notus breathes, 105
 Waves quick the yielding corn; here driven on heaps
 The creaking blades encounter, and behind
 A void appears, which soon the breeze supplies.
 Now tumult rises; now the sound is heard
 Of dreadful preparation; ringing shrill 110
 The clatt'ring armour; the fierce soldiers shout;
 The Leaders loud command; the trumpets clang
 Pierces the troubled air; the scythed car
 Rolls o'er the plain in thunder; far and wide
 To right to left the growing ranks extend; 115
 And now appears in all its dreadful pomp

The

The regulated war. An awful pause
Ensues : terrific silence ! Ev'ry breast
Glowing with martial fury pants for battle.
Frowning they stand, impatient for the signal, 120
Like hounds, whom, vers'd in every silvan art,
Some huntsman to the furzy brake conducts,
The haunt well known of their accustom'd game :
Now at the covert's verge, their glowing eyes
Flash lightnings, and their bristling hair erect 125
Speaks their tumultuous joy : their lashing tails
Beat on their panting sides : they tread in air,
And now prepare to spring ; but aw'd, repress
Their fury, on their master's eye intent
Gazing, and waiting his commanding voice. 130
Before Cornubia's ranks Belinus moves,
And every Chief incites to noble deeds.
“ Warriors, be mindful of your antient fame.
Rouse all your strength, and waken all your fires.
Brave is the foe. To all your triumphs past, 135
On Gallia's plains, and proud Iberia's shore,
To vanquish'd Greece, and that gigantic race
Foil'd in the conflict, while they boast in vain
Their prowess more than human, this blest morn,
By Heav'n with each auspicious omen grac'd, 140
Shall add a nobler conquest.” Silent all
Attend : their bosoms glow with generous rage.

With

With equal ardour in refulgent arms
Loëgria's heroes dress their manly limbs.
There Turon shook his formidable lance : 145
There Ilus frown'd : there Galgacus appear'd,
Proud of unnumber'd trophies : there the shield
Of noble Uther on th' astonish'd foe
Portentous gleam'd : there great Affaracus
Surveys with practis'd eye the marshall'd files. 150
Above the rest, with manly grace adorn'd,
The Monarch tow'rs, and from his glitt'ring car
With eyes on fire, and thund'ring voice, awakes
The ling'ring war, and pours in every breast
The rage of fight, and proud contempt of death. 155
" Warriors, at length the day ye wish'd appears.
Lo! sheath'd in arms, Cornubia's hostile pow'rs !
Lives there, whose soul, to shameful fear resign'd,
Shrinks from the glorious dangers of the war,
And doubts to mingle where the battle burns ? 160
Hear, Jove, and Pallas ! by this hand he dies.
But ye whom Fame's immortal glories fire,
Now prove your might, and emulate your King."
Then from his car, upon the founding plain
Sprung the brave Chief, and rush'd against the foe. 165
As the red meteor in the troubled air
Appears, the dread forerunner of the storm ;
Such from his arms the dismal splendors glar'd.

And

And as across the blue expanse of heav'n
A star swift shooting darts its lengthen'd light; 170
Such was his course, as, gathering strength to throw
The hero shook aloft his fatal spear.
Now wing'd with death, he speeds the rapid dart,
The point lies buried in Bleduno's breast.
Prone on the ground the gasping warrior falls, 175
And grasps with strong convulsive pangs the dust.
Cornubia mourns her slaughter'd Chief. At once
A thousand jav'lines from a thousand hands
Rain dreadful. With extended arm the King
Bears on his sounding shield the rattling storm; 180
And presses dauntless on. And now begins
The conflict; shield to shield, and lance to lance
Oppos'd: now rings the batter'd armour: now
The shout of fierce success, the dying groan,
Mingle their horrors: now the snorting steeds 185
O'er mangled limbs of noble warriors flain
Whirl the swift car, and bathe their hoofs in blood.
O'er the disastrous field, the gloomy Pow'rs
That guide the course of slaughter, and delight
In human woe, ride on the stormy clouds, 190
And, as the tide of conquest drives, to these,
And now to these, reveal their dreadful forms.
Then pale Confusion, Fear, and shameful Flight,
Seizes the bravest; then the mighty fall.

Oh

Oh say, bright Parent of immortal Verse ! 195
 Say, Memory ! what Chiefs renown'd in arms
 The sword of Locrine mingled with the dead.
 First Lago fell ; Vigenius next expir'd ;
 Pierc'd through the shoulder as he turns for flight,
 Andragius bites the ground ; Molmutius next 200
 Writhes in the pangs of death, for wisdom fam'd,
 And skill'd with various eloquence to sooth
 Each stormy passion, and the fierce and proud
 Beneath the sway of Justice teach to bow :
 But vain is eloquence, and wisdom vain, 205
 When ruthless War unsheaths his slaught'ring sword.
 His death with grief the brave Rudaucus views,
 Springs from the ranks, and shakes his threat'ning
 lance :

The King beholds him, and exclaims aloud :
 “ Wretch ! dost thou dare my waken'd rage to
 tempt ? 210

On the cold earth Molmutius bleeding lies,
 Could not that arm thy lov'd companion save ?
 Then share his fate. This mercy I bestow,
 My spear shall join thee with thy friend in death.”
 While yet he speaks, the strong Cornubian lance 215
 Sings on direct. Th' impenetrable shield
 His left extends, and disappoints the blow :
 At the same instant, with no doubtful aim,

While

While yet Rudaucus from his flying dart
Expects immortal fame, and marks its course, 220
His right impels the jav'lin. In his groin
Sudden Rudaucus feels the piercing steel.
Stagg'ring he back recoils ; before his eyes
The shades of death are spread. Loëgria's Chief
Draws his bright sword, and rushes to destroy. 225
In vain. At once an hundred guardian arms
Extend their covering shields, and pour at once
An hundred darts against the Monarch's head.
But not as yet Hell's dreadful ministers
Had, in the course of time prescrib'd, led on 230
Th' appointed minute ; and each thirsty dart,
Turn'd by their breath, or by their sable shields
Repell'd, falls harmless. Full of wrath, he sees
His conquest ravish'd, and with thund'ring voice
Pursues the foe, and fires his martial bands, 235
Then bathes his slaught'ring sword in vulgar gore.
Nor less Belinus to revenge incites
His heroes. Ev'ry kindling bosom glows
With noble heat, and mighty lust of fame.
And first, where tow'ring in the foremost rank 240
The might of Butes stood, Gerontius mark'd,
And aim'd the deadly jav'lin. Sounding shrill
It flew, and pierc'd the warrior's neck. He falls
Prone on the plain. Loëgria's troops behold
Their bravest slain, and smit with panic fear 245

Recede : th' exulting victor bears the spoil.
 Next Durius fell, pierc'd by Catellus' dart ;
 Not unreveng'd, for warlike Leucon saw,
 And with swift motion whirling round dismiss'd
 The polish'd pebble from the rapid sling. 250
 Maglaunus feels its force, while on his car
 Sublime, the boaster vaunts his matchless arm.
 By Elidaucus Phrygian Dares fell :
 Griev'd at the sight, and ardent for revenge,
 The noble Ilus rear'd his mighty lance ; 255
 But satiate with the praise already won,
 The wary Chief within the lines retir'd,
 Nor brav'd superior force. Alternate thus
 The fortune of the battle ebbs and flows,
 And now Loëgria, now Cornubia bleeds. 260
 Now paus'd the fight. A narrow space divides
 The warring nations, and the rattling storm
 Of flying darts subsides : but here and there
 Some arm unbidden hurls the random spear :
 Mean-while, on either hand the Chiefs repair 265
 The ranks disorder'd. Now again the blast
 Of the shrill trumpet, and the shout confus'd
 Of charging myriads, with the clank of arms,
 And sound of rushing feet, pierces the air.
 The tumult thickens : now the keen-edg'd sword
 Is bath'd in blood ; the slaughter grows around, 271
 Wounded they wound, and dying they destroy.

As when the sea, in narrow channel pent,
Where Cambria's mountains lift their snow-clad
heads,

And overlook Eblana's distant bay, 275

By strong attraction rais'd, on either hand
Wins on the shore, and ebbing now retires,
Till in the middle way the meeting waves
Encounter, and in foaming conflict join'd,
Loud roars the furious surge, and mounts to heav'n.

Or, as of old, when that Arabian gulf 281

Into his oozy bed the Chosen Seed

Receiv'd, while his disparted waves, upheld

By Pow'r Divine, to right and left appear'd

High-rais'd stupendous, like th' embattled wall 285

Of some imperial city : vaunting loud,

The rash Ægyptian pours in fierce pursuit

Innumerable force of chariots arm'd,

Horsemen, and foot, that shake the spear, or draw

The sounding bow, into the dreadful void. 290

Then, at th' Almighty bidding, to their bed

Accustom'd rush the whelming waters : loud

They roar, and louder far, than when the storm

Rolls on in thunder through the darken'd air,

And Hell through all her caves, her boundless deeps,

Howls with sulphureous flames, mix'd with the

groans

295

Of damned spirits, whose rebellious arms
Have warr'd with Heav'n. Upon the furling
waves

Arms, chariots, ensigns of proud war, appear
At random tost, and floating carcases 300
Attest Almighty wrath, and baffled pride.

And now two Chiefs of force immense, whose
spears

Wide-wasting had with many an inroad gor'd
The front of battle, in their sanguine course,
Approach, and adverse stand with threat'ning arms.
On either side the troops retiring yield 306

Space for the conflict, and with eager eyes
And awful silence wait th' impending fight.
As when a comet through the darken'd air
Blazes portentous with disastrous fires; 310

And some bright planet in his rapid course
Threatens with fierce encounter, or fix'd star
To hurl from his appointed feat; dismay'd
The nations view the dreadful prodigy,
And wait the ruin of conflicting worlds. 315

So gaz'd both armies, when his lifted spear
Brave Leoline withdrew, and thus began.

" Illustrious Uther, in this sanguine field
Say, does thy breast with wonted ardour glow;
While the keen point of thy victorious spear 320
Is

Is bath'd in kindred blood, and all around
 The race of Troy by mutual wounds expire?
 We too, in league of friendship once conjoin'd,
 Who shar'd the rites of hospitable Jove,
 The mantling goblet, and the festal board, 325
 Now with blind fury, lift our impious arms
 Against each other's life."—"Alas! my friend,"
 The noble Uther with a sigh return'd,
 "Avails it aught in War's relentless ear
 To pour the lenient balm of prudent speech? 330
 Sweet Pity's voice amidst the battle's roar
 Unnotic'd dies away, and Justice speaks
 Her high command in vain. But what are we,
 Whom nor resentment keen of suffer'd wrong,
 Nor pride of pow'r defy'd, incites to arms, 335
 But base submission to superior sway?
 No more I lift the guilty spear. I mourn
 My fatal triumphs, nor the palm of Fame
 Dare claim from actions, which my soul abhors.
 Some God, my friend, some God thy breast inspir'd
 To sheath the sword, and give the nations peace. 341
 Bid we the conflict end." While yet he speaks,
 Glad Leoline restrains the rushing bands.
 Along the lines the rage of war subsides.

Now o'er the dismal field, with carnage spread,
 Terrific Mista roll'd her gloomy eyes. 346

“ Enough,” she cried, “ has stream’d of vulgar
blood.

The hour approaches. Hela’s drear abode
Unfolds its vast, and ever-during gates,
And all her shadowy reign is mov’d throughout. 350

Sisters, prepare the fatal web ; prepare
The pow’rful song.” The dreadful Deities
Each at the word bestrides her fable steed,
Hilda, and Sangrida, abhorred forms,
Besmear’d with blood : Geira, and Gondula, 355

And the dark frown of Hiorthrimula,
At whose dire aspect Nature shrinks appall’d,
The wholesome plants are blasted, and the blood
Chain’d in the frozen veins. At once they rise,
Borne on the rushing blast. The clouds of heav’n
Are roll’d around, and through the misty air 361

The shepherd dimly views the dreadful forms
Glancing with lightning speed. At their approach
The mountain trembles on its solid base,

And at their potent voice, its marble sides 365
Disparting, to the eye of day unfold

The secrets of its cavern’d womb, where reigns
Primæval Darkness on her ebon throne.

And now the fatal loom their hands prepare :

And now they weave the dreadful web ; mean-while
They chant the solemn death-devoting strain. 371

“ Begin the song. To us the King of Heav’n

Commits

Commits the fortune of the fanguine field.
 Beneath our hands the fatal texture grows,
 Which dooms the heroes of the earth to death. 375
 Thrice blest for whom, in his resplendent hall,
 The Sire of Gods the genial feast prepares,
 The fair reward of honourable deeds !
 Weave we the web. Whom Odin's wrath pursues,
 Rack'd with disease, palsied with icy age, 380
 Or basely falling in the arms of peace ;
 To that drear mansion, where her gloomy court
 Hela, abhorr'd of Gods and men, maintains,
 Hurl'd by the Destinies : where Pain resides,
 And bloated Sloth, and Famine's meagre form, 385
 Anguish, Repentance, Sorrow, Shame, Despair,
 Shall howl in torment. To that dismal reign,
 To that abhorred Goddess we devote
 The wretch, whose pride neglects offended Heav'n.
 Attend, ye Destinies ! and hear, oh Hell, 390
 Through all thy realms of horror ! at our voice
 Rouse all thy ghosts, and ratify the doom."
 Then all at once upon their winged steeds
 The Sisters rose in air, and brandish'd fierce
 Their blazing falchions. Soon their rapid course
 Reach'd the wide plain, with heaps of carnage
 strew'd, 396
 Where sheath'd in arms the hostile nations stood
 Pausing from fight. For with astonish'd eyes

The King beheld the rage of war subside ;
 And the two Chiefs advancing o'er the plain 400
 In social guise, with looks announcing peace.
 When thus aloud the noble Uther spoke.
 " Hear, each Loëgrian, each Cornubian band,
 Whom impious rage to mutual wounds incites.
 And ye, obedient to whose high commands 405
 The nations move to war ; Belinus thou,
 And thou, Loëgria's Monarch, noble Locrine,
 Attend to what th' immortal Gods inspire,
 Who see with pity wretched mortals fall.
 Oh spare the relics of the Trojan name, 410
 Our rising country, and our promis'd glory !
 The bravest warrior in thy numerous host
 Select, oh King ; or if thy generous heart
 Demands the conflict, in refulgent arms
 Go forth thyself, and dare Cornubia's pow'rs 415
 To find an equal foe." The King, incens'd,
 Rolls on the Chief his angry eyes, and thus
 Furious replies : " Though every Chief, like thee,
 Shrink from the danger of the glorious field,
 Myself will dare their gather'd strength in arms, 420
 And with unfading laurels grace my brow.
 Then let the troops their shining helmets unlace,
 And give to welcome rest their weary limbs.
 Her bravest warrior let Cornubia chuse
 To meet my single arm : great Leoline, 425
 Ebrancus,

Ebrancus, or Gorbodion's vaunted strength,
Or all combin'd, I dare their rage alone.
Now let the priest the holy rites prepare,
The altar blaze, the sacred victim fall.
Then swear, Cornubia, if th' immortal Pow'rs 430
Shall grace with conquest my victorious arm,
To leave the land in peace." He said, and now
On Jove's high altar rise the hallow'd flames,
The victim falls, and with uplifted hands
Belinus calls th' immortal Pow'rs to witness, 435
And binds with solemn oath the firm accord.
Then each Cornubian Chief, whose glowing breast
Heaves with the brave desire of fair renown,
Inscribes his name, and in the golden urn
The lot is thrown. In deep attention fix'd, 440
(While expectation swells the throbbing breast,)
All gazing stand, and silence reigns around.
When now the Herald to th' impatient hosts
Proclaims the name of Leoline. With joy
The warrior hears, and claims the noble strife. 445
Then rose the King, and press'd in courteous guise
The hero's hand. " Illustrious Leoline,
The Gods, to whom our fame is dear, have giv'n,
Indulgent to our pray'r, a noble foe :
Whose conquest, (and forgive me, generous Chief,
If with so bright a hope my bosom glows,) 451
Shall with its fairest wreath my long career

Of glory crown, Perhaps beneath thy sword
 Fate dooms my fall. How vast thy praise, when all
 My laurels flourish on thy favour'd brow, 455
 And all the triumphs of my arm are thine!

But now the solemn Night her ebon car
 Drives up the steep of heav'n, and parting Day
 Pierces with ruddy beam the Western cloud.
 Since Night forbids the combat, share the feast. 460
 Repose, ye warriors, from your glorious toils,
 And draw new vigour from the flowing bowl,
 When beams the rosy morn, in glitt'ring arms
 We sheath our limbs, and claim the promis'd fight."
 Thus spoke the King, with pride and hope elate;
 But Fate impends, and Death expects her prey. 466

From Avon's banks the fierce Sifilius came,
 And with Loëgria's youth appear'd in arms.
 Him, while the midnight bowl inflam'd to rage,
 And frantic deeds, with threats and vile reproach
 The King had once dishonour'd: Reason soon 471
 Resum'd her sway, and the repentant Prince
 With gifts of price, and high distinction sooth'd
 Th' offended Chief, and fought to gain his love.
 In vain. He brooded silent o'er his wrong, 475
 And nourish'd in his fierce and gloomy soul
 Thirst of revenge, and inextinguish'd hate.
 Him, now retiring to his lonely tent,

With

With flow and fullen step, the fatal Pow'r,
Mista, the minister of Odin's wrath, 480
Beheld, and thither bent her rapid flight,
In form like Elidure, his friend belov'd,
Friend of his youth, who knew, and knowing shar'd
His sorrows, and with his resentments glow'd. 484
" And whither does my friend," the Goddess said,
" Now bend his steps? Shall dark Despair invade
The noble breast? Does Vengeance wake no more?"
" Think not," he cried, and from his flashing eyes
Shot lightnings, " that the hope of dear revenge
Burns here no more. Upon this hated earth, 490
This earth, the kingdom of my foe accurst,
I drag a load of miserable life,
While partial Heav'n retards th' expected hour."
" Arraign not Heav'n," the dreadful Pow'r replies,
" This is the ready colouring of fear, 495
That shrinks at fancied danger; while the brave
Compels reluctant Fortune to befriend him.
Does not that hand with never-erring aim
Speed the swift arrow's flight? And now the King
Unarm'd, and unsuspecting, vainly deems 500
No danger near, and for the feast prepares.
Th' expected hour is come; and lo, the Gods,
The Gods themselves proclaim it!" As she speaks,
Sudden her form expands, her lofty crest
Reaches to heav'n, and to his wond'ring eyes 505
Blazes

Blazes a comet with portentous fires.

Across her shoulders hangs her horrid shield,
And in her mighty hand the pond'rous spear
Seems like a pine, which from the birth of Time
Has brav'd the tempest on Norweyan hills. 510

Then, borne upon the wings of mighty winds,
She hovers o'er him with her shield display'd,
And fills his glowing breast with fearless rage.
Now bent on vengeance, from his quiver'd store
He draws the keenest shaft; with eager eye 515

Now marks its victim: sharply twangs the string;
Trembles the conscious earth; the thunder rolls;
The dreadful Sisters clash their sounding arms.

The King that instant, in the golden bowl
Rais'd high the sparkling wine, and bad his guests
Indulge the feast, and give a loose to joy. 521

His throat receives the deadly weapon; prone
He falls, and spurns the earth, and dying, grasps
With agonizing hands the bloody dust.

Amazement, fear, confusion, seiz'd on all! 525
With tumult now the echoing camp resounds,
And fierce reproach, and furious threats arise.

Loëgria's Heroes grasp their shining swords,
And fit their helms, and lift their pond'rous shields.
Belinus strives to sooth their rage in vain, 530
Disclaims the treason, and attests the skies.

When

When lo ! before their wond'ring eyes appears,
Sifilius, glorying in the bloody deed :

“ Warriors,” he cried, “ suspend your frantic strife.

By me the shaft was sped. The festal board, 535

Th' assembled Chiefs beheld the brutal wrong ;

Behold the just revenge ! How art thou fall'n,

Proud and imperious man ! My triumph now

Is full, and honour from my brighten'd crest

Shines forth with beams unfullied. I have liv'd 540

Enough to vengeance, and with daring hand

Have seiz'd reluctant fame. Now welcome death.”

So saying, with indignant foot he spurn'd

The breathless carcase, and the pointed dart,

With steady hand against his breast impell'd, 545

Plung'd in his heart. He falls, without a groan

He dies, and on his face a ghastly smile

Remains, that speaks the triumph of his foul.

Now all the camp resounds with loud lament ;

And rumour spreads abroad the dreadful tale. 550

The wretched Guendolen, who sat retir'd

Amidst her virgin train, in silent woe,

And torn with grief alternate, and disdain,

Starts at the sound, and of the cause enquires,

Too soon to learn the utmost rage of Fate. 555

For now her careful eyes afar descry

With slow and solemn march the martial train

Advancing through the gloom; their spears revers'd

Are

Are trail'd along, their banners sweep the ground,
 The moon pale glimmers on their burnish'd arms,
 And mournful music loads the passing gale. 561
 And now with boding fears her bosom heaves.
 She knew some hero of distinguish'd rank
 Had fall'n. More near the sad procession now
 Appears, and borne on high a sable bier 565
 Reveals its horrors. There a breathless corse
 Extended lies ; and soon the well-known arms
 Studded with gold, the shield's refulgent orb,
 The proudly-crested helm, which oft her hands
 Had taught to glitter on his manly brow, 570
 When, in the war against the Giant crew,
 She arm'd her hero for the sanguine field,
 Flash on her sight. She shrieks, and shrieking falls ;
 The shades of death her swimming eyes surround.
 Her weeping damsels with assiduous care 575
 Recall her fleeting spirits. Some apply
 The living freshness of the crystal spring ;
 Some wake the gentle breeze. Returning life
 Shoots o'er her redd'ning cheek. Her languid eyes
 She raises, sighing from her inmost breast. 580
 But as again her husband's bleeding corse
 Full in her sight appears, again she faints ;
 Again the virgin train their cares renew.
 At length the struggling passion finds a vent,
 Complaints break forth, and tears begin to flow. 585

“ Was

“ Was it for this,” she cried, “ I rous’d to war
Cornubia’s Chiefs? for this, in rugged camps
Forgot the softness of my gentle sex,
Nor fled the horrid clash of hostile arms?
To mourn for ever o’er my widow’d bed; 590
To see the object of my fondest love,
Life of my life, and end of all my wishes,
Stretch’d pale before me, a poor mangled corse,
With wounds disfigur’d, and besmear’d with blood?
Is that the face, on which so oft I gaz’d 595
With fond delight, and rapture ever new?
Is that the neck, round which my clasping arms
Oft twin’d their am’rous folds, in happier hours?
(Ah happy hours! for I believ’d he lov’d.)”
Then, as officious memory recall’d 600
Each word, each look, each dear and ravish’d joy,
Each word, each look, each joy remember’d, gives
New stings to grief, new horrors to despair.
And now her mighty wrongs, her slighted charms,
And source of all her woe, the Scythian dame, 605
Rush on her mind: now fiercer tumults heave
Her lab’ring breast, and rage succeeds to grief.
As in the Lybian forest’s horrid shade,
Where the rank soil with deadly poisons teems,
And Echo still repeats the dreadful notes 610
Of the fierce savage prowling for his prey;
The lions at eve her craggy den

Returning

96 THE REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

Returning seeks, but seeks in vain her young,
 The dusky hunters' prize : her panting sides
 With fury heave, and mingled grief and rage 615
 Swell at her heart : her fiery eye-balls glare :
 And, every sinew with new vigour brac'd
 By mighty anguish, forth she bounds, to quench
 Her kindled rage in blood. Thus Guendolen
 To vengeance all her savage soul resigns ; 620
 To keenest torture dooms her hated foe ;
 Dwells on the welcome thought with cruel joy ;
 Already sees her tears, and hears her groans,
 And marks with eager eye the pangs of death.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

T H E

THE
R E V E N G E
O F
G U E N D O L E N.

B O O K V.

NOW with firm hand Corineus' daughter grasps
The double sceptre, and Loëgria's Chiefs,
Join'd with Cornubia, to her sovereign throne
Their ready homage bear, her right confess'd.
And either army, which so lately wag'd 5
With mutual hatred unrelenting war,
Now with united banners march, now own
One common Leader, and one Prince obey.
Towards Avon's banks they move: for so the Queen
Commands; whose soul, impatient for revenge, 10
Can know no rest, while yet the guilty dame,

G

The

The rival fair, beholds the light of heav'n.
 Sullen and sad, the haughty Guendolen
 Conceals her cruel purpose, and resolv'd
 Shuts up each avenue to mercy, steels 15
 Her breast to every tender thought; ev'n grief
 Finds there no entrance, while revenge and rage
 Fill all her soul, and all her pow'rs employ.
 The Chiefs respect her sorrows, nor enquire
 Her secret counsels; but conjecture oft 20
 Estrildis' fate. "Alas!" they cry, "what pray'rs
 Shall calm the fury of a woman's breast,
 When rous'd by jealous scorn to hate and ven-
 geance?

Yet Guendolen is born of generous race,
 By virtue grac'd, by fortune's gifts adorn'd, 25
 And pity soonest dwells in noble minds.
 For gentle Sabra too, her tender years,
 Her artless innocence may surely plead,
 May win some pardon for Estrildis' fault."
 Thus commun'd they; for much the hapless dame 30
 Their minds to favour and compassion mov'd:
 For she was fairer than the blushing morn,
 And gentler than the gentle Western air
 Breathing o'er flow'rs, and all her fault was love.

Since Boarex her baffled spells deplor'd; 35
 Since the dread vision of the fatal grove;

Long

Long time to grief abandon'd, and despair,
All bath'd in tears the mournful nymph appear'd,
As some fair lily droops, furcharg'd with rain.
At length bright Hope again began to dawn ; 40
For when does Hope's soft pow'r the wretch forsake ?
When Wisdom tries her boasted arts in vain,
When baffled Reason fails, and all is dark,
Hope spreads gay visions round the mourner's head,
Grief smiles in tears, and Pain forgets to groan. 45
Then stern Adversity her iron scourge
Plies with redoubled force, and all her storms
With fury gathers round the victim's head :
But plies her scourge, and calls her storms in vain ;
Amidst the gloom the fair illusions play, 50
And Fancy gives the joy by Fate denied.
Hence, to her wonted sports return'd at length,
Each irksome thought with pleasures still renew'd
She charms to rest ; and dance, and jocund song,
The lute's soft music, and the sounding lyre, 55
Float on the breeze, and gladden ev'ry shade.
Now too the tongue of Fame proclaim'd aloud
How all Loëgria in her Monarch's cause
Pour'd forth her armed youth prepar'd for war :
How Sture's fair banks with glitt'ring armour shone,
And far and wide the crowded camp extends : 61
And how the King, with swift and secret march,
Had pass'd the foe, and join'd his loyal bands.

This heard, her woman's mind, still prone to
change,

Pass'd quick to rash presumption from despair; 65
And deem'd the foe subdu'd, and her lov'd lord
Ev'n then returning, with the laurel crown'd.

'Twas night, and Sleep, descending o'er her couch,
Shed on her languid limbs his balmy dew:

When, lo! a fearful vision rose. A bier, 70

Borne slow, with solemn march before her pass'd,
O'er which a veil of deepest black was drawn,
And from each searching eye conceal'd the dead.

Estrildis from th' attendant train enquires;

But all, with downcast look, and gesture sad, 75

Move on in silence; but at length appear'd

A female form, superior in her grief,

Majestic, and alone. Fast flow'd her tears,

Incessant, streaming on her heaving breast,

O'er which her arms were folded. The sad sight 80

Estrildis with unwonted passion view'd.

When now, before the couch arriv'd, she stopp'd,

And turning rais'd her mournful head: the tears

Now faster flow'd, and from her breast she drew

Deep sighs, and clasp'd her agonizing hands. 85

Estrildis then her mother knew. She shriek'd,

And grasp'd with fond embrace the fleeting shade.

The strong emotion burst the bonds of sleep,

And all the vision vanish'd; but impress'd

Deep

Deep on her mind the sad remembrance dwelt, 90
And fill'd her secret soul with boding fears.

Now beam'd the rosy morn. Beside their Queen
Her virgin handmaids stood. "Awake," they cried,
"Awake, fair Goddess of these silvan scenes.

For thee the sun his genial pow'r displays, 95
And the glad earth bestrews thy path with flow'rs.
Where'er thou tread'st the rose spontaneous blows,
The hawthorn blossoms, and the lilies spring.

The breeze, that lightly sweeping o'er the lawn
Scarce moves the daisy on its slender stalk, 100
To greet thy beauties still more lightly breathes,
And whispers softly, 'Tis the time for joy."

Rous'd at their gentle call, the beauteous dame
Comes smiling forth; yet still amidst her smiles,
The downcast eye, and often-starting tear, 105
Some inward grief, some hidden care betrays.

Now all, as chance or wanton mirth inclines,
In various sports the pleasing hours employ.
These ply their nimble feet in measur'd dance:
To softest notes, that tender wishes breathe, 110

The glowing damsels move with easy grace;
And from the liquid radiance of their eyes
Desire now sparkles, and now rapture melts.
Soon to quick strains, that speak triumphant joy,
Their nimble footsteps scarcely print the flow'rs; 115
Nor can the eye their rapid course discern

Through all the mazes of the varied dance,
 While this flies swiftly, and while that pursues,
 And shouting mirth from every glade resounds.
 Some, like Diana's virgin nymphs attir'd, 120
 The silver bow, the painted quiver bear.
 These with fleet greyhounds o'er the level lawn
 The flying hare, the dappled fawn pursue.
 While gentler some, in od'rous shades reclin'd,
 Tune softest voices to celestial airs ; 125
 Airs such as once in myrtle groves were sung,
 What time the smiling Queen of gay desires
 Forsook her Paphian reign, her rosy bow'r,
 To hear the ditties of the Lesbian dame.
 To this fair troop, in mute attention rapt, 130
 Estrildis listen'd, for their theme was love.
 They sung how first the sweetly-painful fires
 Steal unsuspected to the virgin's heart :
 Then her soft breast what strange emotions heave !
 What burning blushes tinge her glowing cheek ! 135
 She sighs, but yet she knows not why she sighs ;
 She blushes, yet unconscious of the flame.
 Ah, simple maid ! too well those eyes declare
 Whence spring thy blushes, whence thy sighs arise ;
 Those eyes which sparkle when the youth ap-
 pears, 140
 Those eyes suffus'd with tears when he retires.
 What anguish now her gentle bosom rends !

What

What doubts, what fears, her lab'ring mind perplex,

But see! the Loves in flow'ry fetters lead

The youth enamour'd to the secret bow'r. 145

Now the coy maid with feign'd resentment burns,

Reproves his rashness, and rejects his suit;

But soon the stolen glance, the frequent sigh,

The glowing cheek, the fault'ring voice, betray

The soft deceit, the mutual flame reveal. 150

The Queen delighted hears, the grateful song

Wakes sweet remembrance. Fancy gaily paints

Scenes of past joys, and every joy renews.

In plaintive notes the nymphs resume the strain,

In plaintive notes; but still the theme was Love. 155

They sung the poor, forsaken maid, who weeps

Her charms despis'd, her easy faith betray'd.

Nor swells her bosom with a lighter grief,

Who mourns the absence of the youth she loves,

Torn from her arms to brave the stormy main, 160

Or nobly toiling in the field of fame;

But never, never to return again.

Estrildis now her soul to grief resigns,

While in her mind distracting fears arise;

Fast flow her tears, quick pants her throbbing breast.

Th' attentive virgins change their artful song, 166

And now no more the nymph in absence mourns;

The youth returns, his toils and perils o'er,

The youth returns, with wreaths of conquest
crown'd.

Oh joy unhop'd ! oh bliss beyond compare ! 170

Oh, pangs of absence, amply now repaid !

Nor yet had ceas'd the strain ; but now the Queen

Saw one that press'd the plain with hasty step ;

His head the helmet bore, his hand the spear.

Sudden with beating heart she ran, she flew ; 175

“ And comes my lord ? ” with eager voice she cried.

But when she saw his bent and mournful brow,

His downcast eye, and mark'd his fault'ring voice,

Ere yet his tardy words an utterance found,

She guess'd the worst. At once thro' every nerve 180

Shoots quick the thrilling anguish. With fix'd eye

Gazing on empty air, hands firmly clasp'd,

And pale and ghastly cheek, she stands. In vain

Her sad attendants with assiduous care

Would sooth her grief. As if depriv'd of sense, 185

Their words she hears not, nor regards their tears.

So Niobe appear'd, when her last hope,

Pierc'd by relentless Dian's vengeful shaft,

Fell from her clasping arms, a breathless corse.

The mighty grief suspends the vital powers, 190

Chills every vein, and stiffens every nerve ;

Till by degrees transform'd to rigid stone

She stands, sad monument of heav'nly wrath.

Now

Now on her widow'd couch Estrildis lies,
Still in mute sorrow rapt, with eyes still fix'd, 195
And looks that witness'd deep despair. Till day
Declin'd, and through the solemn hours of night,
Which sooth with welcome rest each lighter woe,
Now by loud wailing, by intreaty now,
Constant and warmly urg'd, the damsel train 200
Would wake attention: now the winning charm
Of music breathes unheard: her darling Sabra
With sweet caresses woos her wonted smile,
And now implores regard with piteous tears.
Her sweet caresses she bestows in vain, 205
And long her tears unnotic'd fall. At length
Sudden upon her child she cast her view.
Then gush'd the torrent. Springing from the couch,
Round the dear pledge of her disastrous loves
She clasp'd her agonizing arms. She wept, 210
She sobb'd aloud; and much with fault'ring tongue,
In broken murmurs, while the bursting tears
Stream on her breast, complains: " My child, my
child !
Why did I bear thee? Thou wilt curse the hour
That gave thee to behold the light of day ; 215
Must curse the womb that bore thee. Oh that Fate
Had cut my thread of life in early youth !—
And must I bear the bitter scorn, the taunts
Of haughty Guendolen? Alas, alas !

There

There was a time when all her rage was vain ; 220

But now the noble Locrine is no more.

What then remains but death ? Oh fatal charms !

Oh beauty, once so priz'd, but now abhorr'd !

Then, then I should have died, when first he fought

To move my virgin heart with guilty love ; 225

When first my conscious bosom felt the flame.

He had liv'd happy yet. Oh Guendolen !

Sure never pity touch'd that savage breast,

Nor gentle love held soft dominion there.

Had I forsaken mourn'd my slighted charms, 230

In tears my lonely hours had pass'd away ;

I would have pierc'd the air with heavy sighs,

And sorrow'd till my aching heart was broke,

And death had wrapp'd me in eternal rest ;

But never, never thought of curst revenge, 235

And stain'd my hands with blood, to me more dear

Than is the vital stream which warms my heart.

Alas ! for him alone I wish'd to live :

In him was all my joy ; to make him blest

My only hope : and, but to see him blest, 240

Though in another's arms, had broke the gloom

Of black despair with some faint beams of bliss.

But thou hast not the soul of woman ; thou

Art merciless ; his blood is on thy steel.

Mine too must stream ; and oh, might mine suffice,

My ready hand should give the torrent way. 246

But

But thou, my child, poor wretched orphan ! oh,
What is reserv'd for thee ? A mother's love
Clings to thee still, and binds me yet to life."
Thus as she mourns the tears incessant stream, 250
Sighs follow sighs, and groan succeeds to groan.
From her dim eyes soft lustre beams no more ;
Her cheek is faded, and her lips are pale.
So beneath Southern skies, some tender plant
Lifts its fair head, and courts the solar ray : 255
Transplanted now, while Summer's genial pow'r
With transient beauty paints some Northern clime,
It blooms in all its native charms array'd :
But when stern Winter comes, and in his train
Bleak storms, and hail, and snows, and killing frost,
Discolour'd all its drooping leaves are seen, 261
And, scarcely blown, its blossoms strew the ground.

Now in the sweet abode of love and joy
Glitters the deadly lance, the helmet flames ;
And where the lute's soft notes, and softer voice 265
Of amorous maiden, breath'd enchanting airs,
The trumpet's clangor rings. A warlike train,
Charg'd with their Sovereign's stern commands,
appear.

Plung'd in despair, with mighty grief oppress'd,
Impatient of the load of wretched life, 270
Their fierce demeanour, and denouncing death,

Each

Each dark and frowning brow Estrildis saw,
 And saw unmov'd. What ills had Fate in store,
 What could inventive cruelty inflict,
 Which to her anxious mind the busy hand 275
 Of Fancy, in the sad and lonely hour,
 In all its horrors had not yet pourtray'd ?
 Not so the damsel train. With piercing shrieks
 They rend the air ; and now with frantic gesture
 Crowd round their much-lov'd mistress. On her
 robe 280
 One clings in speechless woe : one bathes her hand
 With tears : one fondly twines her clasping arms
 About her slender waist : another seeks
 To print upon her lips a parting kiss :
 This, rolling in the dust, her graceful locks 285
 Tears from the roots, and beats her wretched breast ;
 That with loud cries arraigns relentless Heav'n.
 She with mild action sooths their stormy grief,
 And thanks their faithful love. Advancing now,
 A rude unmanner'd ruffian from her brow, 290
 The mark of royalty, (so will'd the Queen)
 The sacred fillet tore with churlish hand.
 Another with opprobrious taunts revil'd.
 Behind her back the harsh and galling chain
 Confin'd her snowy wrists. With threat'ning voice
 Now the rough soldier urg'd her trembling steps. 296
 Her

Her beauteous eyes, suffus'd with tears, she rais'd
With such a sweet and moving eloquence,
That all at once his savage soul was mov'd,
And his stern nature, long to fights of woe 300
Inur'd, and practis'd in the trade of blood,
Now first to pity yielded. Through the band
Spread swift the soft contagion. Now they saw
With alter'd mind each soul-enchanting grace
Borrowing a nameless, and resistless charm 305
From her sad fate. Such was the general woe,
So were their rugged bosoms mov'd, it seem'd
As if the daughter, or the wife of each
Was led to instant death. And now they came
Where held the rival Queen her throned state. 310
Soon as impatient Guendolen beheld
The object of her hate thus fall'n, and captive,
A gloomy joy her features overspread.
"Is this," she cried, "is this the boasted form
At whose superior lustre my weak charms 315
Must fade away, no more to wake desire?
Is this the haughty dame, whose stern decree
Has sentenc'd Guendolen to shameful exile?
Say, does thy mercy yet revoke the doom,
Or can no pray'rs thy stubborn heart subdue?" 320
Th' ungenerous insult the fair mourner heard
With silent anguish. Prostrate on the earth,
Before the feet of her relentless foe,

Awhile

Awhile she wept. "By those who gave thee birth,
By the dear name of mother," she exclaims, 325
"For oh, canst thou, who bear'st a mother's name,
Behold my sorrows with unpitying eyes?
Not for myself I plead. (Too well I know
What fatal doom awaits me.) But my child—
She never has offended. Look on her, 330
Oh bend thine eyes upon her, see, she kneels,
She weeps, poor victim of her mother's guilt.
Oh let not virgin innocence in vain
On tender mercy call. Oh spare her, spare her,
And ages yet unborn shall bless thy name. 335
Ev'n in the gloomy regions of the dead,
Thy Locrine's spirit shall rejoicing hear,
And thank the goodness which preserves his child.
Ah, wherefore dost thou frown? Yes, let me perish,
I own my guilt, prepare new torments for me. 340
Patient I suffer, and my dying voice
Shall pray for thee, so thou but give me hope
My child, my darling Sabra may survive."
"Urge me no more," the haughty dame replies,
"My soul is fix'd immoveable as Fate. 345
Detested wretch! driv'n from my husband's bed,
Hurl'd from a throne, the daughter of Corineus
By thee has wander'd forth a woeful exile.
How many heroes by thy crimes have fall'n! 349
What widows mourn, what orphans thou hast made!
By

By thee my Locrine died. And would'st thou now
Plead the curst fruit of thy pernicious joys
To win reluctant mercy? No, the ghosts
Of myriads in thy fatal quarrel slain,
My husband's spirit, call for signal vengeance. 355
Thou diest, and she, the minion of thy love,
Is she not thine, and shall she hope for mercy?"
Thus while she speaks, Estrildis' soul is torn
With racking anguish. Now she knows all hope
Extinguish'd, and the near approach of death, 360
Inevitable death, beholds. Now all
The mother swells her breast. With eager eyes
She gazes on her child: the galling chain
Forbids a last embrace. The tender maid
Lifts her imploring hands in pray'r to Heav'n. 365
Now by each fond endearing name she calls
Her agonizing parent; now intreats
Remorseless Guendolen, and weeps aloud.
But, lo, the ministers of death approach.
Her fears redouble; throbs her heaving breast; 370
She flies with trembling feet. Alas! in vain.
Pale, gasping, down she sinks. Like some poor hare,
Whose failing speed the clamorous pack o'ertake.
One eager hound hangs o'er her furry back;
His tusky jaws already drink her blood. 375
Quick glancing with a bound she turns away,

But

But still where'er she turns she finds a foe.
Rudely they hale the fainting maid along,
Nor could her youth, nor could her lovely form
Move kind compassion. Oh, what bitter pangs, 380
Estrildis, tore thy miserable breast
At this distracting sight ! Oh Guendolen,
Has not thy savage fury spent its rage ?
See how with frantic air the wretched mother
Struggles to burst her bonds, and struggling still, 385
Pursues her with her eyes ! " Barbarians, where,
Where do you drag my child ? Oh quickly kill me,
Let me not see her death. Her cries are vain.
They drag her to the cliff. The river rolls
His rapid wave beneath. Estrildis strains, 390
Distracted, every nerve. Maternal love
And fear supply unwonted force. She bursts
From the surrounding guard ; she runs, she flies :
In vain the guard her rapid course pursue.
She gains the cliff, and round her darling child 395
Had thrown with eager haste her clasping arms,
But still her arms were bound. From the steep brow
She sees the victim hurl'd. When, lo ! the stream
Suspends his course ; the swelling waves subside ;
The winds are hush'd ; each breast a sacred awe 400
Pervades, prophetic of some strange event.
And now the yielding surface of the lake

Divides,

Divides, and all the train of sister Nymphs,
Nereids, and Naids, from their coral beds,
And sparry grotts, their shining tresses rear, 405
In their soft arms the falling maid receive,
And swiftly bear from sight. The wreathed shell
Of Triton sounds meanwhile, and tells th' approach
Of the Sea Gods: Ocean, the hoary Sire,
Majestic Tethys, and the dreaded Pow'r 410
Who wields th' earth-shaking trident, Nereus old,
Doris, and Amphitrite, and belov'd
Of thund'ring Jove, the silver-footed dame;
And every God, and every Nymph that rules
The fountains, and the rivers of the isle. 415
Nor absent was the Queen of soft alarms,
Sprung from the wave, delight of Earth and
Heav'n,
Fair Aphrodite. Scatt'ring balmy sweets,
The Loves around her, and the Graces move,
And the light Zephyr plies his filmy wings. 420
Won by her soft request, her kindred Gods
The gentle Sabra, from her race deriv'd,
Accept, henceforth the Goddess of the Stream,
With holy rites ador'd, and warbled song.
The pale assistants fear and wonder seiz'd, 425
While joy unhop'd on lost Estrildis beam'd,
And fill'd her soul with courage not her own.

H

“ Now,

114 THE REVENGE OF GUENDOLEN.

“ Now, Guendolen,” she cries, “ I scorn thy pow’r,
And all thy rage is vain. Oh, welcome, death !
No longer arm’d with terrors, thus I court thee.”
So saying, from the steep and lofty cliff, 431
Deep in the flashing wave she plung’d, and died.



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